KEEP STRONG

MIRACLE: Where Can I Find A Job?

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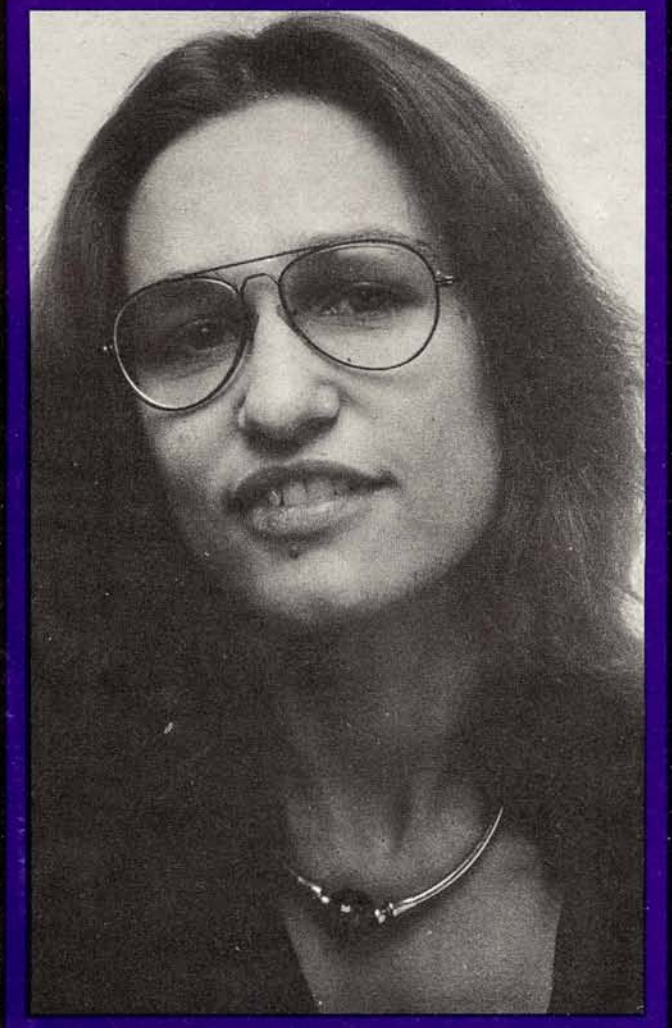

HELEN SHILLER TO RUN FOR CITY COUNCIL

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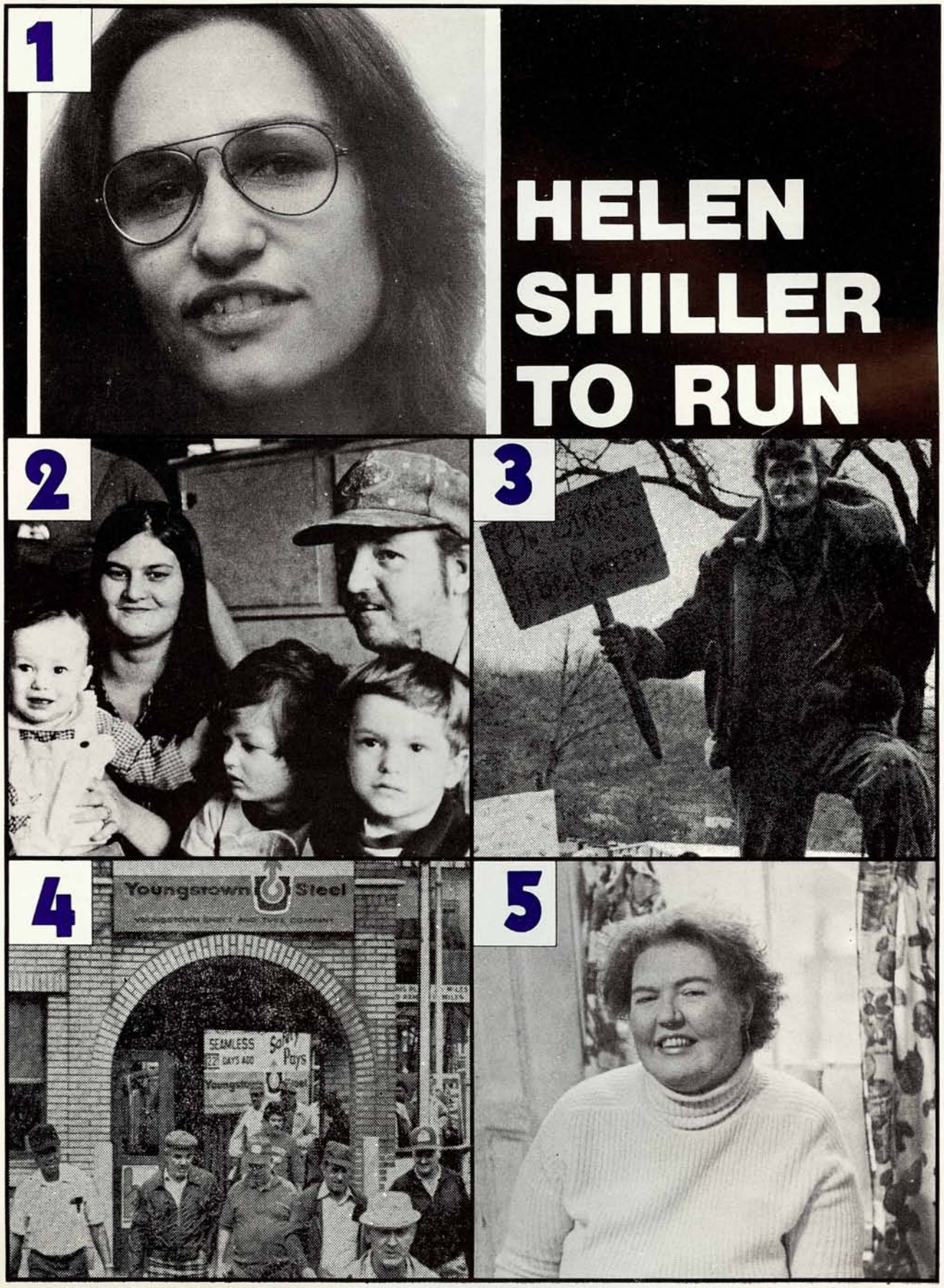

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KEEP STRONG MARCH, 1978

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In This Issue

1. Stating emphatically that she "will carry our community struggles into the city council," KEEP STRONG editor Helen Shiller announces her candidacy for Chicago city council. See page 32.

2. This month begins a series focusing on the plight of the unemployed across the country by zeroing in on Stockton, California. See page 36.

3. As the successful miners' strike captures the national attention, grassroots organizations speak out in support. See page 25.

4. Massive steel plant shutdown raises serious questions about the future of this country's economy. See page 47.

5. This issue presents the last in a three-part series on the Irish in New York. See page 42.

EDITORIAL

From The Staff Of KEEP STRONG Magazine

HELEN SHILLER FOR CITY COUNCIL!

As we received the phone calls and watched the people coming in urging Helen Shiller, Editor of our magazine, to run for city council we came quickly to understand that there was really no choice in the matter. It is clearly Helen's responsibility to run as it is ours to keep up the standards of this magazine for a while without her full attention.

KEEP STRONG *magazine, like the ISC whose views it reflects, has attempted to build a vehicle for poor and oppressed people to use in the struggle for survival and empowerment. Its intent was to create a voice in which the true day to day struggles for survival of ordinary people would be heard and to create a weapon to expose the injustices they faced and the men and institutions behind those injustices. This was Helen Shiller's dream as she brought the magazine from the drawing boards to be an attractive, nationally distributed and well-respected addition to the printed media in this country. With less than little resources, her determination and the support of the people in poor and working communities have made* KEEP STRONG *grow more successful each year.*

And by the same principle, that poor and working people need vehicles for survival and empowerment, it is only logical that she should take on the responsibility of being the standard bearer in the fight for representation by the communities of the 46th ward. We are proud that she is willing to take on the responsibility that so many have urged upon her in these last months.

For the last eight years, members of the ISC have worked with many other dedicated people to provide models of successful struggle that would be useful for poor and oppressed communities in other cities. As the city and federal government withdrew services from this inner city community, a multi-service center was created out of community cooperation that provides more and better services than the government had done before.

In answer to the threatened destruction of family housing by slumlords and developers, a strong tenants union was built. A food cooperative answered the rising cost of food.

A tutorial program was the response to low reading scores in the elementary schools in this community. A four year jobs-oriented college met the failure of the city college system to take on

"I will take our community struggles into the City Council."

effectively the educational needs of this community head on.

Soon a new medical clinic will open through the struggles of this community and the cooperation of the Cook County Hospital. In response to the desperate treatment given victims of black lung disease and other occupational health problems, a strong and effective Black Lung Association was formed and continues to fight today.

Organized door to door and block to block, the Heart of Uptown Block Club Coalition prepared a step by step proposal for community development and housing rehabilitation in the face of the city's unwillingness to involve community residents in the planning process for their neighborhood.

Fraudulent "welfare mills" have been exposed and run from the community while the welfare defense organization has fought successfully for hundreds of recipients who were the victims of unjust bureaucratic practices.

Lawyers and legal education clinics have been provided for those that needed them. Friends of the mayor and others with "clout" who attempted to rape this community through "urban removal" and windfall development profits have been stopped in the courts.

And the efforts of this community to identify and stop the city's masterplan to run low-income people from the central areas have been joined together with the efforts of other neighborhoods in the Black and Latino communities across the city.

The fight for survival and empowerment is far from over, but there exists now a record of community organization and struggle that those, like Helen Shiller, who have been part of it, can be proud of. It would be wrong to ignore the political arena in which decisions that affect our lives are made every day. As our Editor, Helen Shiller has said, it is necessary to take our community struggles into the city council. That will certainly be a community victory!□

ON THE STREET

"DO YOU THINK THAT CARTER SHOULD FORCE THE COAL MINERS TO GO BACK TO WORK?"

Robert Mason
N. Racine

"No, I don't. I believe in the American attitude to have your choice. They want the miners to go back to work, yet they won't give what they're asking – or at least try."

Ray Hollers
N. Kenmore

"I don't think they should. They got their own opinions about what they want to do and stuff like that. They ought to be able to make up their own mind. Because he's the president doesn't mean nothing. I don't like the guy really."

Val Valsan
N. Sheridan

"The coal miners should force the management. I think that Carter should be forcing the management. What else is there to say?"

Charles Smith
N. Ridgeland

"No, I don't. I don't think he should force them back to work. I think he should still let management and the union work it out if they can. I don't like to see union or management put in a control position. The reason people strike is to force management, and when their strike gets effective, to stop their strike seems unfair to me."

Jill Norwood
S. Sawyer

"Not if they're not getting paid what they think they should be getting paid. Like I say, I don't know too much about what's going on, as far as what they want, but usually when somebody goes on strike, it's because they're not getting paid enough; or it's the conditions or something like that. So, I think if the conditions aren't up to par, or if they're not getting paid what they think they should be getting paid, I don't think he should force them to go back."

N. Khalilifar
W. Barry

"No, I don't think he should force them back to work because probably they are not happy with their lives, or they don't have enough money to support their lives. I think he should provide them with the opportunity to change the situation."

Leroy Copeland
N. Fremont

"No, they should try and get all the money they can possibly get. If working class people don't try to get all they can, they don't get nothing. About the health situation, they're demanding more money and better working conditions. They have to look out for their own safety. If they don't get better working conditions, then there ain't no sense in working. Something could fall in on them, and there you go. Anything could happen to them."

Glenda Johnson
W. Buena

"I don't guess that he should, If they don't want to work, they don't have to work. I think that he should let them negotiate, and then they'll get something better."

Mary Hood
N. Kenmore

"Not really. I think they should make an agreement on more money or something so they'll have something so everybody doesn't get cheated, so people can have their lights back and their energy."

Al Katz
W. Wilson

"Carter should not force the coal miners back to work because of the length of time that he's let it drag on. He should just federally take over the mines and operate them himself if that's what he wants to do. But it would be too heavy to try to force those miners where they're getting mistreated by their own union now. I don't think the miners would stand for it. I don't think Carter should force them back to work. If he really wants to do something, he should take over the mines himself."

Welfare Rights

Who Will Verify The Verifiers?

VERIFY: *To prove to be true or accurate; confirm.*

(Chicago, Ill.) General Assistance payments and a much needed medical card were held back for one month from Evelyn Labrador because "home verifiers" of the Department of Public Aid claimed that they couldn't find the Labrador residence, when in reality they never tried. This is the only conclusion that Marina and Juan Labrador, Evelyn's parents, can reach after having been denied assistance for their daughter and having gone through an appeal hearing to challenge the denial.

Mr. and Mrs. Labrador, both awaiting decision on a social security disability claim, applied for General Assistance for Evelyn when it became known that she needed an operation. She was no longer on the family ADC grant because she was nineteen, not in school and, therefore, not covered by the family medical card.

An application was filed December 20, 1977. The interview was held January 3, and the application was approved pending confirmation of residence by the home verifier. "I waited and waited, and nobody showed up," explained Mrs. Labrador. She didn't hear anything until January 16, when she received a letter informing her that the application was denied.

Mrs. Labrador decided to appeal the decision. "If you don't appeal you never know what happened. They can put on the paper anything they want, and you don't know." What the home verifier put on the paper was that attempts had been made to locate the Labrador's on January 6, 9 and 11. The verifier, who appeared at the appeal hearing January 31, a Mr. Slayton, claimed that on the third time, he went himself.

"I know that he's lying, because if he came here, I'd know because I was here all the time. My husband was here because he was sick, too. And the last time Evelyn was here sick in bed. Somebody had to be here. The verifier said I lived in apartment number 16. No, I live on the third floor, apartment 6, and I have my name on the bell and the mailbox. He said we didn't have our name on the mailbox, and we didn't have the name on the bell. And he said the door was open — he just came straight in.

"It was very cold those days — maybe he went to the restaurant and had a cup of coffee and went back [to welfare]. He doesn't think, maybe because we are Puerto Rican, that we're going to do anything about it."

In the meantime, Evelyn was to go into the hospital on January 17 for her operation. Because she had no medical card, she was almost denied admittance into the hospital. Only through the Labrador's persistent efforts in dealing with the hospital social worker and

Marina Labrador: "If you don't appeal, you never know what happened. They can put on the paper anything they want."

the doctor did it become possible for Evelyn to be admitted. Since then, Evelyn has actually had two operations and is still in the hospital.

Though Mrs. Labrador had filed an appeal, the medical card was obviously still needed. On the 24th, she went back to public aid and applied again. This time a home verifier had no trouble finding the Labrador residence, and, finally, during the first week in February, the application was approved. But for one week, Evelyn was in the hospital without coverage.□

Flat Grant = Flat Broke

When the flat grant system went into effect several years ago, most recipients, like the ones above, were against it.

(Chicago, Illinois) The Aid to Dependent Children Program (ADC) in Illinois is run on the "flat grant" system, where the amount of money a family gets is determined by the number of people in it.

For example, a mother with one child is entitled to get $216 a month. On the books, it's not supposed to make a difference whether the child is two months old or 17 years old, or whether the rent is $100 a month or $200 a month. Everybody gets the same grant.

The idea was to make things less complicated for the caseworker and thereby more efficient. Before the flat grant system, caseworkers had to write out orders for clothing, appliances, baby needs, winter coats, shoes, etc. With the flat grant they are not bothered by these details any more. That is the plan on paper.

Linda McGlin recently moved, and her new caseworker came to visit her to do a redetermination (a process where the caseworker goes over all the aspects of a case and decides whether the recipient is still eligible and, if so, for what.)

"I was the manager where I lived before," explained Linda, "and I got $100 off my rent. I'd show apartments, clean the building — whatever had to be done. My check was reduced to $168.67. Then when I moved over here, my cousin Bobby moved in with me. The rent is $200, and he's giving me $100 a month towards the rent.

"When I explained this to my caseworker, he wanted to deduct that $100 from the flat grant, which I wasn't getting to begin with." (Linda's check has not been changed since she moved.) That deduction means Linda would get only $116 a month for her and her son to live on. One hundred dollars of that would have to go for rent, leaving $16 a month for gas and electric bills, food, clothing, transportation, household supplies and any other expenses.

"I filed an appeal right away, and now I'm waiting to hear the decision. I should be getting $216 now for me and my son, but I'm still getting $168.67, and now they want to cut me to $116. I have to figure my electricity averages from about $15 to $20 a month, and gas is maybe $4 or $5. They were going to reduce my food stamps to $12, but you figure it all out, and there's no way I can make it. I can't even make it on $168, let alone $116."

There are nearly 300,000 people in the city of Chicago who are in need of low-income housing and who are eligible for Section 8 housing. Linda McGlin is one of these people. According to the spirit of the legislation that created Section 8 housing, families should only have to spend 25% of their income on rent. Section 8 provides a subsidy for low-income families that covers the difference between 25% of their income and their rent. In 1976, although over 300,000 people were eligible for Section 8 housing, funds for only 571 units were available.

Were Linda McGlin to have been one of the lucky 571 people to qualify for Section 8 she would have only paid $54 a month for rent. The federal government would have paid the rest, and her flat grant would have stayed at $216.□

Unemployment

Two Factories Slated To Leave Greenpoint

(Greenpoint, Brooklyn) Up until two weeks ago Alice Byrnes left her home at 11:30 every morning and walked to her job at the Speadmark plant on Ash Street. Several months ago, Speadmark began moving its facilities to New Jersey, and some of the workers began commuting.

Now Mrs. Byrnes leaves Greenpoint every morning before the sun is up. She takes the subway to the Port Authority bus station, boards at gate 64 and rides the bus with many other such commuters to the new Speadmark plant, operated by Abraham & Straus department store, in Secaucus, New Jersey.

Mrs. Byrnes looked for work in other places, but was told that at age 50, she was "too old to be hired." Her point of view is that "We need jobs here in Greenpoint, for men and women, no matter what age. It seems like every place is moving out, including another factory on Ash Street, and I'd like to know why."

George Mitchell took a job at

After 20 years in Greenpoint, the B.H. Kruger Company is moving to New Jersey.

As companies like B.H. Kruger (above) prepare to leave, the people in Greenpoint are feeling the effects of a change over which they have no control.

the B.H. Kruger Cosmetics Company, which has been in Greenpoint for 20 years. Unable to find work in his trade as a textile printer, he was forced to take the Kruger job even though it pays only $106 a week, hardly enough for a family of six. Now B.H. Kruger has started laying people off altogether as the company begins its wholesale move to a new plant in New Jersey.

Companies are leaving Greenpoint for New Jersey in order to beat the tax, just like other companies are moving down south so they don't have to pay the workers union wages. In the community left behind, residents are angered by the serious loss of jobs. The small, closely-knit community that was once surrounded by busy factories is feeling the effects of a change over which they have no control. As one long-time resident said, "I can't afford to sit back and wait for Greenpoint to be renamed 'Ghost Town.' "□

On The Job

They Frame Their Workers, Too

(Chicago, Ill.) Intercraft Industries is the largest manufacturer of picture frames in the world. But they don't only know how to frame pictures, they also know how to frame their workers. Ask John Taylor, fired January 25, for "authorizing a work slowdown, insubordination, and refusing to return to his job." In reality, John was fired because he spoke up and organized on the shop floor about working conditions and the rights of the workers on the job. He was also fired because he demanded respect from the company, and when he got none, he merely "talked back to them the way they talked to him."

The firing occurred within ten days of a new supervisor, Bob Boynton, coming into the spot welding department where John was a material handler. "The main story about him was that he was really strict, and things would start happening when he showed up." And things did start happening.

John's first face-to-face encounter with Boynton came over the issue of the piece rate workers, all women, working during breaks, forcing the straight time workers, all men, to work faster to catch up after breaks. When the union said it was a company matter, John had his meeting with Boynton. "He was belligerent from the start. I knew his reputation, and I had the feeling that he knew mine. 'This is no concern of yours, Taylor. We'll take care of it.' " Boynton called John, "Taylor," throughout the discussion, but John stopped him and said, " 'Call me either John or Mr. Taylor, as I call you Mr. Boynton or Bob.' He really got mad at that and turned red in the face. But what he really got mad about was there was five or six of us men who got together and got the company to stop the women from working during break time."

About a week later, on the 25th, soon after John arrived at work, he found out something was in the works. First a co-worker was called to the office. When he came back he said there was "a lot of trouble. They're saying we're working too slow." John shrugged it off, because they're always saying that. Then the shop steward came by and told John, "Hey, you want to keep your job, don't you? You're going to personnel at 9:30. Just tell them you're sorry. You won't do it again and that you want to keep your job." But she wouldn't tell John what it was about. "She knew what it was about, but she never takes a stand."

It was at this meeting that the ax came down. The company claimed that John's co-worker said John told him to slow down the day before. John pressed the issue and then was told that another worker "overheard" this conversation. The witnesses were brought in, upon John's demand, and they repeated their

John Taylor (above) was unjustly fired from his job. He is making full use of the grievance procedure to get it back.

story. John maintained he never told anyone to slow down.

"If anything, I might have told him, but not yesterday, not to rush real fast, because it's dangerous. He has told me that himself, a number of times." At this Boynton jumped on him, "So you do admit that you authorized a slowdown?" When John again denied this, Boynton again displayed the same demeaning attitude that he did the week before. "It sounds like you have some kind of problem, a persecution complex. Maybe you should get some kind of help." They kept pressing John to admit that he authorized a slowdown, and John brought up other instances where the company falsified charges against him. When they asked if he was calling them liars, John said he was and that he would not go back to work with two men who had lied against him.

In filing his grievance John wrote it himself, not relying on the union president to do so. The only thing that Vince Gaglione, the president, added was, "Tell them you want your job back with back pay." The response of the company to the grievance was that they would hire John back, but without back pay, and with the charges remaining as a warning against his record. Vince advised John to accept the offer, saying that they would have a year to fight the charges. "I said to myself, I wouldn't last three weeks."

John's lawyer gave him sound advice. "If the union will really fight for you, if the union is really good, you can go back to work and count on the fact that they'll fight for you and probably win your grievance. However, if they are as bad as you say they are, then you have no choice. You can't go back to work under those circumstances because they won't fight for you, so you have to put pressure on the union to expose the fact that they will not represent you." This strategy lays the groundwork for a possible suit against both the company and the union.

By the time John went through the second step of the grievance procedure it was clear the union was not representing him. He was not included in all discussions on the case as he had asked, in a registered letter, receipt requested. They would not back John's counter proposal that he go back to work, without back pay, but with no charges hanging over him. The second step of the procedure was a meeting between the company and the union. Nothing was resolved. As the meeting ended, John said, "We'll just have to take it to arbitration." (The third step of the grievance procedure.)

Even though it is the union's decision to go to arbitration, and he does not think they will do this, John advises workers in similar situations to "Never take the approach of asking them for anything. I presumed that we were going to arbitration. That's where justice is." If the union doesn't take the case to arbitration, John will have to decide whether or not to sue, in this case both the company and the union. Most importantly, John further advises, "If you're going to sue, if you're going to arbitration, then you have to have witnesses, people who are willing to put their jobs on the line, to tell the truth about the job and about the union."□

Maids Getting Cheated On "Motel Row"

(Chicago, Ill.) Linda Walker (not her real name) works as a maid at the Capri Motel (not its real name) on N. Lincoln Avenue in order to provide her children with carfare so they can go to school. She says her employers cheat workers of their wages by paying less than the minimum daily wage, keeping all the tips themselves and forcing workers to do overtime without getting paid for it.

"They give you a sheet with how many rooms are supposed to be done. You have to complete your rooms, then your work is done. I do about 22 rooms a day. I hear you're supposed to do no more than 15 or 16 rooms a day. Today I came in at five minutes to eight and didn't finish until about five or six minutes after six. I get paid for overtime, but no time and a half, just straight pay.

"I don't sign in with her. I look at the time when I come in the door, then I put it on the same sheet she gives me with the rooms to do. I write my time when I come in and when I go back. A lot of times I think I've been cheated, because, according to my calculation, sometimes I'd work 42 or 43 hours. If you

don't watch it you'll get [paid for] a straight 40 hours.

"There's no union. I asked about that when I first started working there with some of the other girls, and one of them said that the owner had told her that they didn't have to go by certain rules because it was a small business. The average salary is hard to say because she says she doesn't even have to pay minimum wage."

Mary Little (not her real name), a maid who quit, agrees with what Linda Walker says. The working conditions were "pitiful. She cheated me out of so much money. When it came payday she gave me $30-48 a week. I got what she gave me. Everybody she gets quits. They're so hard on you, too. they stand over you and holler at you. And it's worse for the maids who actually live there because she

"Motel Row," stretching up N. Lincoln Avenue, is one more place where survival and high unemployment are forcing people to take jobs where employers take unfair advantage of them.

because she pulls them out of bed at any time of the night to clean a room which has just been used for a few hours."

Linda Walker also said that they have certain rules for certain guests, called "special guests," who do not sign the register, and who, after they are finished with the room, leave the money in the room for the desk clerk to pick up. Ms. Walker pointed out that this was illegal. "That way, there's no tax. She's not even paying income tax. That's her money, clear. She's breaking two rules there. The register law says you must register so they can tell how much money you take in and check it against your books. This way a "special guest" can come in there, and the money's not even registered. So that way, it goes straight into their pockets. How many times a week do they do this? That money adds up."

"Motel Row," stretching up N. Lincoln Avenue until it disappears into the suburbs of Lincolnwood, is just one more place where women who know that they're not going to do much better than $2.65 an hour can get work. And it's just one more place where survival and high unemployment is forcing people to take jobs where employers take unfair advantage of the situation.

The Division of Wages and Hours of the U.S. Labor Department stated that all employers who file with the federal government must pay minimum daily wage and time and a half for overtime (anything over 40 hours a week). Employees who believe their employers are guilty of illegal labor practices can file a complaint with the Division of Wages and Hours, and an investigation will follow.□

Tenants' Rights

Block Club Coalition Goes To Work On Kenmore Street

(Chicago, Ill.) 4122 N. Kenmore, like many of the buildings in Uptown, was on the verge of destruction after a fire last year destroyed four of the six apartments, forcing most of the tenants from the building. But two families decided to stay and do what they could to save the building from being destroyed.

The Heart of Uptown Block Club from the Kenmore neighborhood has been able to assist

At 4122 N. Kenmore, water pipes were wrapped with heating coils to keep them from freezing.

Since then the building has been sold to a contract purchaser, David Egan, who, encouraged by the spirit of the people living there, made a commitment to do all he could to make the building a decent place to live. So far a brand new heating system has been installed, and extensive plumbing work has been started. With community youth doing the work, the four burned out apartments have been completely stripped to the walls, and electricians and plumbers are scheduled to begin work on renovating the building.

The Heart of Uptown Block Club from the Kenmore neighborhood has been able to assist the building in receiving a small grant for a home demonstration where the water pipes were wrapped with heating coils to keep them from freezing. Also, supplies were obtained, and volunteers came together to fix the building doors and broken windows to prevent losing heat from the building.

Future plans include hiring unskilled youth from the area to repair the whole structure and to learn building skills in the process.

One of the tenants, Judy Branham, stated, "I knew that if we left the building there would be no hope of saving it. The states attorney's office and city inspectors have come out almost weekly, telling us that we have to get out of the building because it isn't fit to live in. Well, we knew it wasn't fit to live in, but we also knew that if we didn't make the landlord work with us, we wouldn't have any place to live. It's hard in Uptown to find housing when you have children."

Another block club member explained, "With an owner who's willing to cooperate with the tenants and people who are willing to fight to save their homes, there is a way to save these buildings in the neighborhood. On the day we asked for volunteers to help in fixing up the building, as many as six youths pitched in throughout the day, along with the owners.

"We worked to accomplish just a few minor repairs, but it served as an example that we don't have to wait for large federal or city grants. We can start now to insist that landlords work with us, roll up our sleeves and start to work at whatever needs fixing. If we don't know the skills, then we need to knock on some doors and find a neighbor who's willing to take some time out and show us how to do the work. Only then will we be able to save our neighborhood from the planned destruction and neglect that we see all around us."□

No Heat, No Water, No Business

(Chicago, Ill.) Owning the small laundromat at 4142 N. Sheridan Road that Uptown resident Mrs. Bickel lives next door to has meant the difference between the ability to support herself and dependency on public aid. But when the building changed ownership six years ago, the Seville Apartments and the small businesses below it started to go downhill.

According to the title search, the property has changed hands nine times in the past six years. At least that was the way it looked. Actually, the same Dan O'Brien who bought it in 1972 still owned it in 1978. And for six years he continued to hide his name behind various "fronts," people who do the day to day work of bleeding the building. This is standard operating procedure for housing speculators who have no intention of being held accountable for their buildings.

"He let it go down and down," Mrs. Bickel said, when asked whether O'Brien kept up the building. Explaining how the tenants upstairs were evicted, Mrs. Bickel went on to say, "They said, 'Everyone out by October 1.' When I asked the manager what was happening, he said they were going to remodel."

There was no remodeling and no heat or hot water either, despite the fact that Mrs. Bickel always paid her rent, which included heat and hot water. When Mrs. Bickel asked the landlord's son, Peter O'Brien, why there was no heat or hot water in the sub-zero Chicago weather, he arrogantly replied, "Is that all you called me up here for?"

Then an old leg injury flared up. Mrs. Bickel's leg was suddenly paralyzed, and she was subsequently hospitalized. She says her doctor is willing to testify that her injury was caused by the unheated laundromat.

Victim of greedy housing speculators, Mae Bickel's laundromat and livelihood are destroyed.

While hospitalized, she received word that her small business had been ruined. Due to O'Brien's unwillingness to turn on the heat, the water pipes in the apartments upstairs froze, burst, then flooded the radio and T.V. shop below so badly that the owner was forced to salvage his goods by evacuating them to the inoperative laundromat next door.

With no heat, no water and no business, Mrs. Bickel decided to withhold her December 1977 rent and hasn't paid rent since then. Now she is forced to rely on a meager disability check and an $18.50 monthly social security check for her survival. "When they took this away [the laundromat], that meant I'd have to ask for help. I could always take care of myself, but now with my leg...so it really hurts."

But Mrs. Bickel is not the kind of person to take all this without fighting back. She *had* to fight back, because her survival is at stake. She has taken legal action and has a suit pending against O'Brien.

An elderly neighbor commented on the urban renewal and subsequent displacement that is devastating Uptown. "You've got to expect that kind of thing in a neighborhood like this. I've lived here 16 years, and I know what I'm talking about. They're trying to break people down so they'll move out and move on. Then they'll rebuild the neighborhood any way they want to."

Legal Rights

Tax Benefits Programs — The Poor Get One In A Thousand

(Chicago, Ill.) Running down the list of tax credit and tax deduction programs, it can take hours to find the two or three programs that benefit anyone except the very rich. Carter's campaign promise for tax reform has gone the same way as his promise to "restore the cities" and "end unemployment" — he has figured it isn't time to be changing things, the people are going to have to wait.

There are, however, some tax laws that can mean hundreds of dollars for the poor, the elderly and the disabled. Two of the most important tax benefit programs are: Earned Income credit and the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief (an Illinois tax program). Very little publicity has been done on either program, primarily because the federal and state governments would rather not pay the money. The result is that a great number of people who qualify for the benefits do not file, even though it defeats the purpose of both laws.

Earned Income Credit

This benefit can pay up to $400 to low-income people even if they are not required to file a return. There are two basic requirements, according to the IRS:

A. You earned less than $8,000 in 1977. "Earned income includes wages, salaries, tips or other employee compensation. It does not include social security or welfare benefits."

B. "You paid over half the cost of keeping up a home in the U.S. in which you lived and which for the entire year (except for temporary absences for vacations, school, etc.) was also the home of (1) your child (or children) who was under 19 years of age or a full-time student, or (2) your dependent child who is disabled."

If you qualify for the credit you can apply simply by filling out a regular tax return form (1040 or 1040A).

Senior Citizens And Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief

The Circuit Breaker Law, so called because of the supposed relief it gives to people on fixed incomes, was begun in 1972, but has received very little public attention since that time.

To file for the Circuit Breaker credit, you must have been:

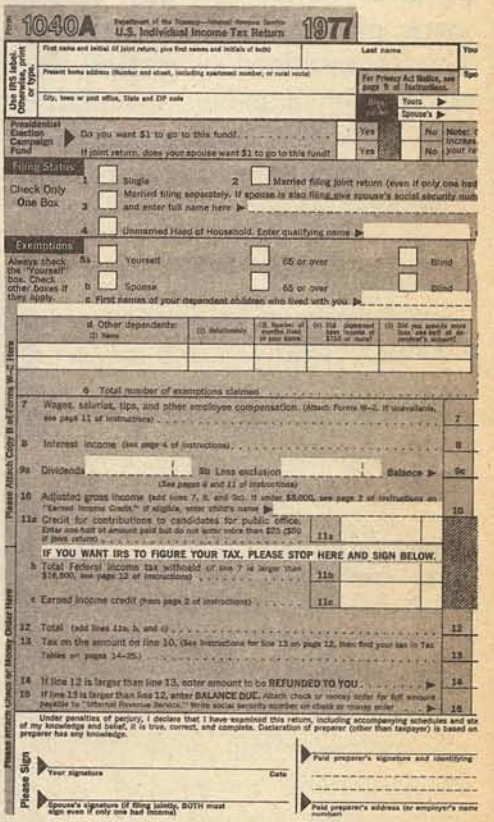
1. 65 years of age or older before January 1, 1978

or

2. 16 years or older before January 1, 1978 and also have been unable to work because of a physical or mental disability.

The credit is limited to residents of Illinois (although many states have similar programs). The applicant cannot have an income which exceeds $10,000, which includes all forms of compensation — retirement plans, disability pensions, public assistance, etc.

The property tax credit is calculated either on how much rent or property tax you paid last year, compared to your overall income. Your application *does not* require rent receipts or written proof of your residency. It does require the name and address of your landlord as well as the length of time you have been living at your present


Form 1040A Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service U.S. Individual Income Tax Return 1977

Use IRS label. Otherwise, print or type.

Presidential Election Campaign Fund

Filing Status

Check Only One Box

Exemptions

Always check the "Yourself" box. Check other boxes if they apply.

Please Attach Copy B of Forms W-2 Here

Please Attach Check or Money Order Here

Please Sign

IF YOU WANT IRS TO FIGURE YOUR TAX, PLEASE STOP HERE AND SIGN BELOW.

Earned income credit can pay up to $400 to low-income people. To apply, fill out 1040A form, above.

residence. In any case, if you are elderly or disabled (all SSI and SSD recipients qualify for the program), then you should file for the credit whether you know you will get the benefits or not. The grant can go as high as $650 for one year.

If you file for and receive the tax benefits in either program, the law states that *no money can be deducted from either public assistance or social security* grants.

Anyone who even thinks they may qualify for either tax credit should file as soon as possible. Assistance in filing is available in all IRS offices or the State of Illinois Building and in Uptown at the People's Tax Assistance Program at the Uptown People's Community Service Center.□

Police Watch

West Town Community Angered

(Chicago, Ill.) On June 4, 1977, after the annual Puerto Rican Day Parade, nearly 3,000 people congregated with family and friends throughout the day at Humboldt Park in Chicago's West Town community. In this atmosphere, two young Puerto Rican men were killed by sargeant Walton of the Chicago Police Department, who shot them in the back. No guns were found near the victims, a fact to which a number of witnesses have come forth to testify.

On January 26, 1978, the Justice Department issued a statement to CBS news. In that statement, Justice Department officials are quoted as saying that they have not received enough cooperation from the Puerto Rican community and that this constitutes grounds to end the grand jury investigation.

Leaders of the Puerto Rican community are outraged. They are demanding: (1) a public apology from Mr. Sullivan's (Justice Department) office which issued the statement; (2) an official statement from that office regarding the current status of the grand jury investigation into the Humboldt Park killings; (3) a continuation and acceleration of the investigation into the matter; and (4) an end to FBI harassment of the families of the victims.□

Family members of the slain men testify at a hearing shortly after the murders. Justice Department officials now claim that they have not received enough cooperation from the Puerto Rican community.

Occupational Health

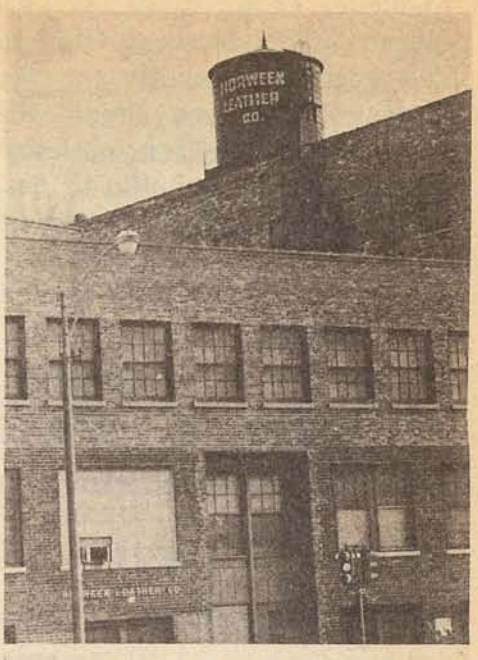
Company Negligence Kills Tannery Workers

(Chicago, Ill.) On Wednesday, February 15, eight workers of the Horween Leather Co., a tannery at 2015 N. Elston, were killed when a chemical shipment was pumped into the vat of another chemical. The resulting chemical reaction produced deadly hydrogen sulfide gas which within minutes felled seven workers, and injured 37 others as the fumes spread throughout the block-long plant. One of the injured workers suffered a heart attack and died later.

While Chicago newspaper headlines blamed a tannery worker for the tragic accident, union officials and the Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (CACOSH) put the blame on the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for not enforcing regulations which would have prevented the accident. Jorge E. Camargo, of the Amalgamated Meatcutters Local 43-L, charged that OSHA never made inspections of area tanneries which would have turned up Horween's negligence.

OSHA administrator Barry White claimed that his office, which covers six midwestern states, is too understaffed to do preventive inspections, despite the fact that the federal agency's budget went up 20% in 1978 to $10.8 million.

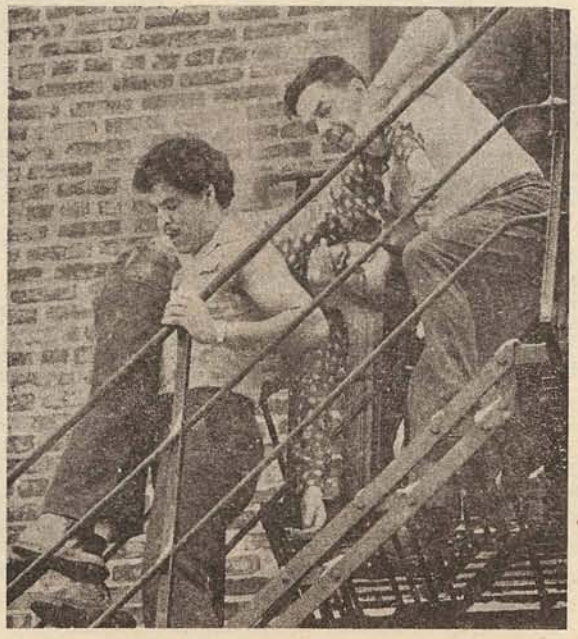
Current regulations require clear identification with signs at chemical valves; employee training programs; and the compartmentalization of tanneries to limit the spread of poisonous gases. At Horween Leather Co., there were no signs to warn the truck driver that he was at the wrong valve. The driver, new on the job with Chemical Leamna Tank Lines, had never been to Horween before. A company employee gave him the go ahead to pump his chemical into the unlabeled valve. There was no plant supervision once the chemical-containing truck arrived.



The Horween Leather Company Tannery, 2015 N. Elston Avenue. Federal regulations were never enforced.

Ironically, these regulations came about as a result of an almost identical fatal accident in Berwick, Maine in 1971. Six workers were killed in that incident. Three tannery workers were killed in a similar accident in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1975.

David Simmons, secretary of CACOSH, in citing responsibility underscored the point, "It's time OSHA stopped waiting to act until after people have been killed in large numbers. The agency must begin moving to prevent disasters like this. Until it does, more people will apparently have to die."□



A victim of lethal gas fumes produced at the Horween Leather Company Tannery is carried down the fire escape by fellow workers. Eight people are dead, 37 injured.

Black Lung

Wayman Taylor Wins Black Lung Claim

(Chicago, Ill.) "We've got to all stick with this Black Lung Association, because it's fighting for the poor people. They closed out my black lung claim three years ago and told me to forget about it. I don't believe I could have won without the Association." These words were spoken by Wayman Taylor, 70 years old, veteran of 19 years in the coal mines of West Virginia and a victim of coal worker's pneumoconiosis, at the February 1978 meeting of the Chicago Area Black Lung Association.

In what a CABLA spokesperson described as another little step in the struggle for justice, the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals of the Social Security Administration was obligated to re-open Wayman Taylor's black lung claim and pay him benefits with full back pay.

In 1974 Mr. Taylor was informed by the Social Security Administration that his black lung claim had been denied. They said they did not believe that he had spent at least ten years in the mines, and therefore, they did not believe that any black lung he "might have" was caused by the coal mines. They never told him, either in this denial letter or during the many trips that Mr. Taylor made to Social Security, that two experts paid by the SSA to read X rays admitted that his showed black lung. They didn't tell him that, in spite of his claim that he worked for 19 years in the mines, their computer said otherwise. They didn't tell him that their computer said he was working for a shoe-shine and hat cleaning parlor in Pennsylvania from 1937 to 1942. They didn't tell him that they were assuming this information to be true because it came from a computer print-out (even though it contradicted Mr. Taylor's own statements). And they didn't give him a chance to respond to this mistake by the computer because they failed to tell him what the computer said.

Although Mr. Taylor had visited the Social Security office several times, he was never allowed to see his own file. When his granddaughter attempted to see it on his behalf (a legal right), she was refused. An SSA employee told her there was no possible way to prove to their satisfaction that Wayman Taylor had ten years in the mines.

When CABLA finally got the file and found out about the alleged shoe shine work, it took one 13 cent stamp and two weeks to conclusively prove that the computer was wrong. The letter they sent to the state of West Virginia to get a copy of Mr. Taylor's miners' certificates from the years 1939 and 1942 is a procedure which Social Security was supposed to do routinely three years ago when they denied his claim.

Ever since CABLA's public hearing, held in October 1976, it has been a demand, because of

"Another little step in the struggle for justice."Wayman Taylor won his black lung claim benefits, with full back pay.

the widespread denial of the civil rights of black lung victims residing in Chicago, that all the old claims filed before 1973 (when the black lung program was made much more restrictive) be re-opened for full back pay. CABLA members feel that Wayman Taylor's case is similar to most, and they continue to fight on for all previously denied claimants and their widows.

Meanwhile, as KEEP STRONG goes to press it has been reported that the 1977 Black Lung Reform Act was passed by the Senate and the House and is expected to be signed into law by Carter by March 1, 1978. Spokespersons for CABLA reported that while the bill represents a partial victory by ending the 1981 cut-off and limiting some of the past abuses, certain compromises forced by Senator Javits (N.Y.), Senator Long (Louisiana) and other friends of the energy monopolies have left the door open for the Department of Labor to twist around the real intent of the law. Black Lung Associations will need to fight for some people's control in making the rules once the bill is passed.□

Consumer News

Pershing Manor Residents Form Food Buying Club

(Stockton, Calif.) Faced with the ever-climbing prices of food, residents of Pershing Manor Apartments have formed a food buying club to offset the high prices found in supermarkets. The buying club is a member-operated community program, organized by the Stockton chapter of the Intercommunal Survival Committee (ISC). Operation of the club began in mid-February with its first weekly order offering a selection of eight items.

Savings for the club come from ordering in quantity at wholesale or below retail prices. Purchasing is done with the idea of eliminating as many of the "middle men" as possible by buying directly from wholesalers, distributors and farmers. Members receive an order form each week with various items listed. The completed orders are then collected and totaled up to one large order. Once the food is purchased, it is brought back to Pershing Manor where it is broken down to individual orders and picked up by the members. Volunteers from the membership supply the necessary manpower.

Members of the food buying club save money by ordering in quantity at wholesale or below retail prices.

One member explained some of the advantages of the food buying club. "You run around to all the stores for stuff on sale, but the money you save on food is spent on gas. The stores include in their prices the costs of advertising and promotional gimmicks, like the bingo games, which makes the prices higher. The food buying club has only one gimmick — low prices."

Pershing Manor is a 72 unit apartment complex, located off

Navy Drive in southwest Stockton. Many of the residents work in the nearby fields or canneries. Tillie Lewis Food Co. announced recently that its No. 1 cannery (located just a few blocks from Pershing Manor) will hire 900 less workers during canning season. This is expected to increase the need for families to save on their food bills. Stockton's unemployment rate has been higher than the national average for about 20 years.

A spokesperson for the ISC observed that the program's benefits go beyond just saving money. "Everyone knows that poor and working people would be a lot better off if they stick together. The trick has been getting people to stick together. The food buying clubs are a way of bringing people together behind a very real need. Unity will only happen when people begin to see the concrete benefits."

The ISC is currently planning to open buying clubs in other locations in Stockton. The orders of all the clubs will be added together to make the largest possible orders and further reduce prices, according to the spokesperson.

Future plans of the Pershing Manor Food Buying Club include: taking advantage of nearby farm prices during harvest times, increasing membership and expanding the number of items available.□

Utilities

Lots Of Snow, Little Heat

(Greenpoint, Brooklyn) Since December 1, 1977, 150,000 complaints have been filed with New York City by tenants without heat or with not enough heat. However, only 700 court orders against landlords, forcing them to provide heat and hot water, have been obtained by the Housing and Litigation Bureau, in the nation's largest city. Despite the severity of New York's weather this winter, 200 of the city's 450 housing inspectors, responsible for investigating heating complaints, remain laid off because of cuts in the city budget.

The heating problems, which thousands of poor and working people face this winter, reached crisis proportions within a two week period in January and February when 30 inches of snow fell, leaving the city incapacitated.

Guernsey Street in Greenpoint is one of those streets that was built to squeeze people in too tight to live comfortably. All of the buildings are within eight feet of the street, and the street is too narrow for double parking. Days after other streets were plowed or shoveled out, cars remained snowbound there.

131 Guernsey Street is a building with eight apartments where everyone knows each other. There are eleven children under 13 years old, and another is on the way. Tenants have had problems with heat the entire winter, being forced to use their ovens or electric heaters to heat their flats. As a result, gas and electricity bills are sky high.

The Seiler children have to sleep with their winter coats on, because there is no heat.

Joan Seiler is six and a half months pregnant. She, her husband Harry and their six children live in the first floor apartment in the building at 131 Guernsey Street. Late one night, as the children were sleeping with their winter coats on, Mrs. Seiler described what it has been like this winter. "The radiators get hot for 10 or 15 minutes irregularly during the day, and at night they stay cold. Other problems like cracks in the windows and drafts from the basement could be fixed, but the landlord refuses."

The Seilers explained that not only has the landlord refused to provide adequate services, but the city has refused to enforce the Housing Maintenance Code. Section D26-1703 requires minimum temperatures of 68 degrees from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. from October 1 to May 31. Like thousands of others, the Seiler's only hope is that a warm spring comes early this year.□

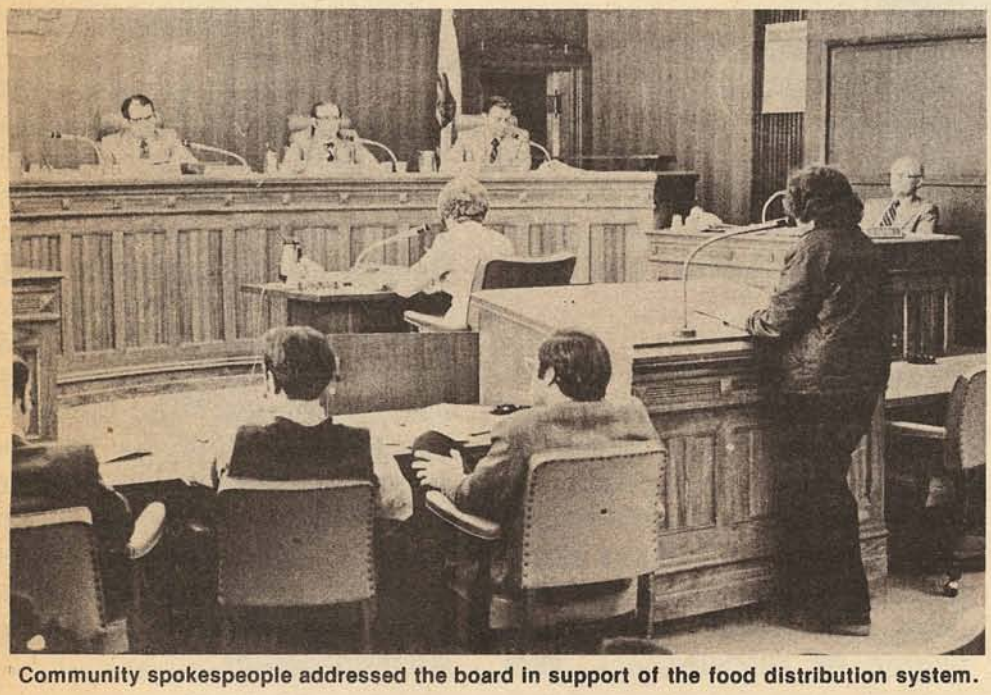
Fighting City Hall

San Joaquin County Food Distribution System Debated

(Stockton, California) Promising a food distribution system which will feed tens of thousands over the next few years, organizers and supporters of Stockton's emergency food bank compelled the county board to reverse an earlier decision and seriously consider an agreement permitting the food bank to act as the county's agent for collection of surplus food from canners and growers in San Joaquin County.

Late in 1977, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 199 which grants tax credits to food processors who donate surplus food to community-based distribution centers. The bill authorizes the individual counties to establish centers which can collect and distribute the food to families in need.

Early in January 1978, the emergency food bank had submitted a proposal to the county board of supervisors seeking designation as the county's collection center. At a meeting of the county board on January 24, the organizers of the food bank made the formal proposal, but board supervisors resisted the idea of getting the county government in between the wealthy growers and low-income families in San Joaquin County. The board refused to take any action, putting the matter off for three weeks and asking the county administrator for a report and an opinion.



Community spokespeople addressed the board in support of the food distribution system.

At the board meeting on Tuesday, February 14, county administrator C.E. Dixon recommended that the county not get involved in the food distribution program in a formal manner, arguing that the state did not authorize any money for the program, and food banks had already been operating for years without an official relationship with the government.

A series of speakers from the audience quickly responded to the administrator. Reminding the board of the massive unemployment situation in the county, community spokespeople pleaded with the board not to shy away from its lawful responsibility to represent all the people of San Joaquin County. More than three dozen community people, who had come only to hear the board's decision, observed as board members debated the question for over thirty minutes.

Board member Richard Yoshikawa clarified the issue when he told his colleagues, "The people need food. We took less than three minutes to spend $400,000 today. This program doesn't cost

us anything, and we've already been debating it for over 45 minutes."

A few minutes later, the board accepted a motion and voted to authorize two members to meet with community groups to work out details of the county-wide collection and distribution program. The recommendations which will come out of the meetings will be presented to the board for formal approval in late March.□

Uptown Residents Brutalized By Chicago Firemen

(Chicago, Ill.) Cecil and Marie Hardy are managers of the building at 4646 N. Magnolia Street. Mrs. Hardy also works full time in a factory, while Mr. Hardy, who has recently suffered a heart attack, maintains the building.

On the night of February 8 shortly after 8:00 p.m., a couch caught on fire in a second floor apartment. Mrs. Hardy got her son Butch and another tenant to carry the couch outside to the back of the building. They packed snow on it to put out the fire. About an hour later, it caught fire again and began to spread to some window sills in the back. Mr. Hardy then took a hose, hooked to the basement, and tried to put it out.

At the same time, Mrs. Hardy called the fire department. When firemen arrived, the captain went to the second floor while several others went through the basement to the back. According to Mr. Hardy, "By the time they got here, I had the fire out. They started chopping and tearing up, and I asked them why, because the fire was out. Well, they used profane language, and I just walked off."

Finally they stopped chopping, and began walking towards the door to leave. As the first one passed Mrs. Hardy who was standing in her door to the hall, "I asked him if the fire was out. He said, 'Yes, Ma'am.' I said, 'Thank you very much for coming.' When he got to the top of the stairs and started out through the door, my son was coming in through the door. He just opened the door and pushed his head through, and the fireman shut his head up in the door. He smashed his head two times."

As Butch describes it, "I went up to the second floor with the captain, and he wanted me to go and get the pass keys. I came back down the front stairs, and as I opened the door, the fireman slammed the door back in my head. I backed up and came on through, and three of them grabbed me. One grabbed me by the throat and pushed me down the stairs. The other guy put a foot in my throat, and the one way in the back said, 'Kill that son of a bitch, kill that son of a bitch.' "

Mr. Hardy then saw what was going on, walked up and said, "Hey, that's my son. Don't hit him." Mrs. Hardy explained, "So one of the firemen just set the fire extinguisher down and his ax, and started choking my husband with his elbow. He stretched his neck way up there

Cecil and Marie Hardy with their grandson.

Marie Hardy points to the area where firemen beat up her husband: "He just kept on pounding him."

and started hitting him in the back and side with his fist. He started kicking him in the back.

"Then the other firemen came up, didn't ask any questions, just started hitting him for no reason. I started yelling at them. 'Don't do this. This is my husband.' He said, 'I'm going to kill him.' I said, 'For what? What did he do?' He just kept on pounding him. I said, 'Please, don't do this. This man is a heart patient, he's got a bad heart. Please, don't hit him any more.' He said, 'I didn't come out here to take care of sick people, I came here to put out the fire.' I said, 'The fire is out. Why don't you go and mind your own business now?' He said, 'Why don't you get inside or go wherever you belong?'

"They were blocking my door, and I said, 'We're the managers of the building. Would you please turn him loose?' He said, 'No, I won't.' So I said, 'Well, you're not going to hit him any more.' I moved in front of him. He hit me on my shoulder, and he bruised me all up. This short guy came up and gave my husband the knee. I tried to block that lick, too. Another fireman grabbed my son by the back of the head, pulled him backward and shoved him down on the floor. They started kicking and beating him."

Mr. Hardy added, "We have all kinds of witnesses that saw this. All the people had come out of their apartments, and they know exactly what went on. Some of the firemen took their axes and blocked the doorway so none of the tenants could get in to help us at all."

"They had everything blocked off," said Mrs. Hardy. "I couldn't get the baby because he was at the back end of the hall where his grandfather had been."

One of the tenants called the police, and according to Mr. Hardy, "They didn't do anything at all. The police sargeant asked if any of his men were in it. We told him no, and he said, 'It's not my bag.' He took his men and went out."

"The fire captain came down," continued Mrs. Hardy, "and said, 'What's going on?' I told him this is the most ignorant thing I've ever seen. Why are they doing this to us?

"We helped my husband into the house. He was so nervous and tore up, I was afraid he was going to have another heart attack.

"The captain asked me what I was going to do. I said I've never been confronted with anything like this before, and I really don't know what action to take or what steps to take. But I told him, 'If anything happens to my husband, I will own that fire station up there. I want you to know that.'

He just kind of grinned and said, 'Well, you know, you're fighting city hall.' I asked him for the names of the firemen, and he said, "Let me handle it, I'll handle it.' My son asked if this fireman could be put on suspension. He said, then his supervisor would have to come out. I said, 'It's like this. They didn't need any supervision when he was standing there beating my husband and me to death.

"He asked my husband how he he was feeling, and when he said 'not too good,' he wanted to take him to the hospital. I said, 'Do you really think I'm that crazy, after these men have beat him like this, I'm going to trust you to take him to the hospital?' I

said he'd wind up dead before he got to Weiss Memorial.

"Later when I washed all the dirt off of me I saw the bad bruises all over. It hurts all the way across my shoulder and through my chest. I think they must have used my breasts for punching bags because they hit me so hard through my breasts, they are so sore.

"Thursday and Friday I had to miss work. We both went to the hospital Friday night, because he wasn't able to get up and go before that. He could barely make it to the bathroom, and that was all, for two days. He's only got one kidney, and I was afraid they'd injured his kidney the way they were beating on his back. He started passing blood through his urine, and I was upset about that. He has to have some surgery done now.

"At the hospital we were told that this wasn't the first time that people have come in because of the firemen beating on them. So we're not the first victims of this. I called Channel 2, Channel 7, the man in apt. 304 called Channel 7, we called the *Sun-Times*, and none of them have come out or even called us back."

Three other tenants who witnessed the beating describe the same chain of events. Shocked and outraged by the firemen's behavior, they are willing to testify to what they saw, when the Hardys file suit.

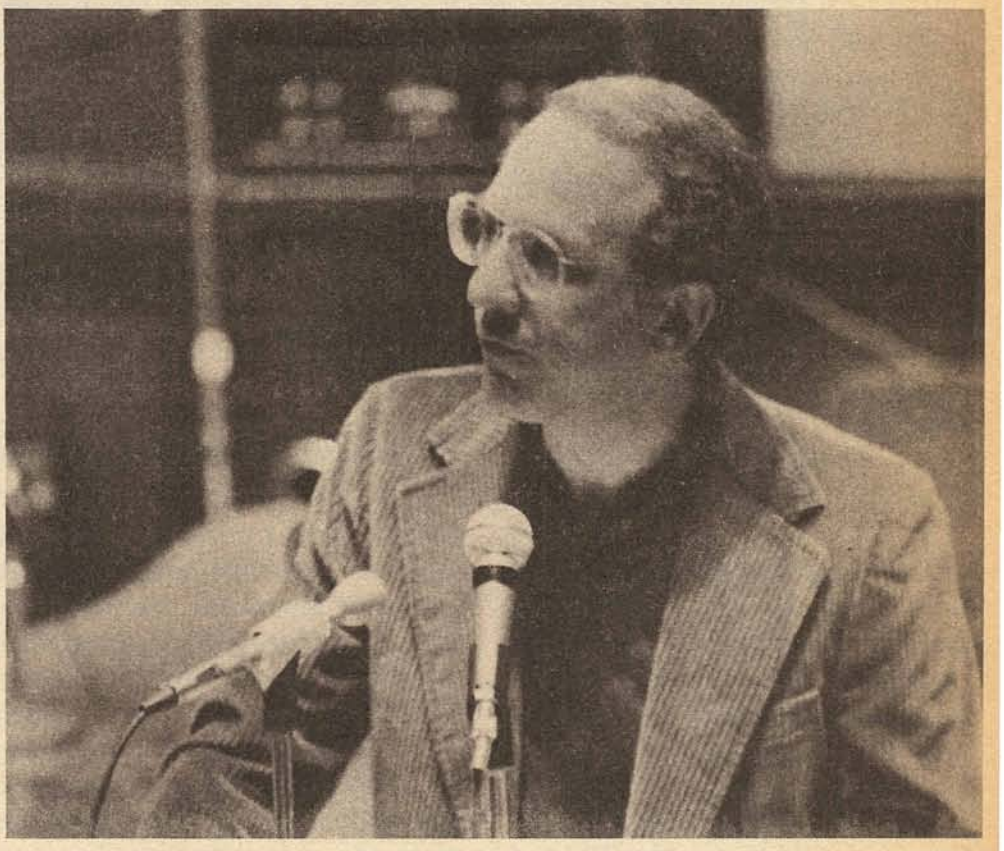
Mr. Hardy said, "The trouble with this is the firemen, the police and the hospital are all in this together. The hospital is not going to say the firemen did something, and the police are not going to say the firemen did something. They won't admit it on one another. But this thing has gone far enough. If the people don't do something about it, we're gone, that's all. Because now when something like this comes up, you can't even get it on the news, you can't get anybody to accept it.

"The people in this neighborhood have got to stick together, or else they're going to take it over. That goes for the police, firemen and all. We have seen police act like this before, but never the firemen."

"I couldn't understand it," said Mrs. Hardy. I thought surely they would be on the people's side. But I don't even want to call them now if there's a fire. I'm afraid to call them back. I've always had a lot of respect for firemen and policemen, but this is it. I don't have any respect for any of them. Not after this."□

City And Feds Snub Chicago 21 Coalition

(Chicago, Ill.) The lawsuit filed against the city of Chicago and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce last June by the City-wide Coalition to Stop the Chicago 21 Plan has been transferred to Federal



James P. Chapman, attorney for the Citywide Coalition to Stop the Chicago 21 Plan.

The history of resistance to the Chicago 21 plan and the OEDP is summarized in a handbook called "Fighting the Chicago Masterplan," published by the Coalition.

Judge Bua and further snagged by the EDA's refusal to cooperate with the court's latest request.

The lawsuit was filed last summer after refusal by the EDA and the city to respond to questions raised by the Coalition regarding the legality of the city's application for Overall Economic Development funds.

The Coalition claimed at that time that the city failed to include the participation of representatives of Chicago's minority population or the unemployed or underemployed in the development of the Overall Economic Development Plan they submitted to the federal government December 1976. This plan is expected to bring into the city approximately $250 million if approved. The OEDP plan prepared by the city will set the direction for all economic development of the city into the 21st century, Coalition members claim.

The suit was filed when other forms of communication had been cut off by the city and the federal government. Judge Prentice Marshall, originally assigned to the case, ordered the EDA and the city to turn over to the Coalition documents which showed the illegal procedure the EDA and the city were using to get around the Coalition's claim that the minority members on the OEDP committee had not been selected by minority citizens, as the law required.

Following the transfer of the case to Judge Bua, Coalition attorneys told Judge Bua that the organizations the EDA and the city had selected to be involved in the illegal OEDP committee did not by themselves represent the city's hundreds of thousands of Black and Latino citizens, particularly the unemployed and underemployed. At the request of Coalition lawyers, Judge Bua suggested that the EDA send representatives to Chicago to meet with the Coalition to discuss their objections and proposal for neighborhood elections of additional committee members.

The EDA refused Judge Bua's suggestions stating that they saw no reason to meet with the Coalition and that they would handle the matter in the way they saw fit.

"Judge Bua was obviously irritated with EDA's attitude. He said that he would rule on legal technicalities raised by the EDA and the city in motions they filed to dismiss the lawsuit. Our lawyers are preparing papers now to oppose these motions. We expect Judge Bua's ruling near the end of March or early April," said a Coalition spokesperson.

"The Coalition is confident that the legal technicalities raised by the city and the EDA will be defeated and that shortly there will be a full public hearing on the illegal procedures being followed by the city and the EDA," the spokesperson concluded.□

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINERS

As KEEP STRONG goes to press, the miners strike is nearing its third month; the president is threatening to invoke the Taft-Hartley act, to force the miners back to work, and the utility companies are screaming they do not have enough energy to serve the nation. While the media has focused on the threat to energy supplies in Indiana and Ohio, no word has been mentioned about the close relationship between the coal operators in the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) and the large utility and steel companies.

According to information uncovered by Dan Hendrickson of Mountain Life and Work: "Utilities industries that are messing around in Coal include, the state of Ohio, number one. TVA is one of the most notorious because of the long term contracts with Peabody and all the coal reserves that TVA itself owns. And now they're also contracting with Martco Coal in Martin County, Kentucky, and Stockton Coal in Bethel County, and both of these are non-union outfits. Besides TVA in the south, there's Carolina Power. The Duke power companies in North and South Carolina get their coal from Eastover Mining Company which owns Brookside mine and others, and have long term contracts with A.T. Massey Company in Martin County, Kentucky and Mingo County in West Virginia. Massey sends its coal for the next 30 years down to Duke Power, and it's all scab coal. All across the country, these other companies are actually running their own mines, such as the Texas Utilities on the lignite coal out there. It's not unusual."

At the same time the point of view of the miners themselves has been undermined. It is for these reasons that KEEP STRONG presents the following interview with a miner, statement from the Chicago Area Black Lung Association and the fact sheet on the strike. Written by both working and retired miners, they should speak for themselves and will hopefully give our readers the other side to the story.

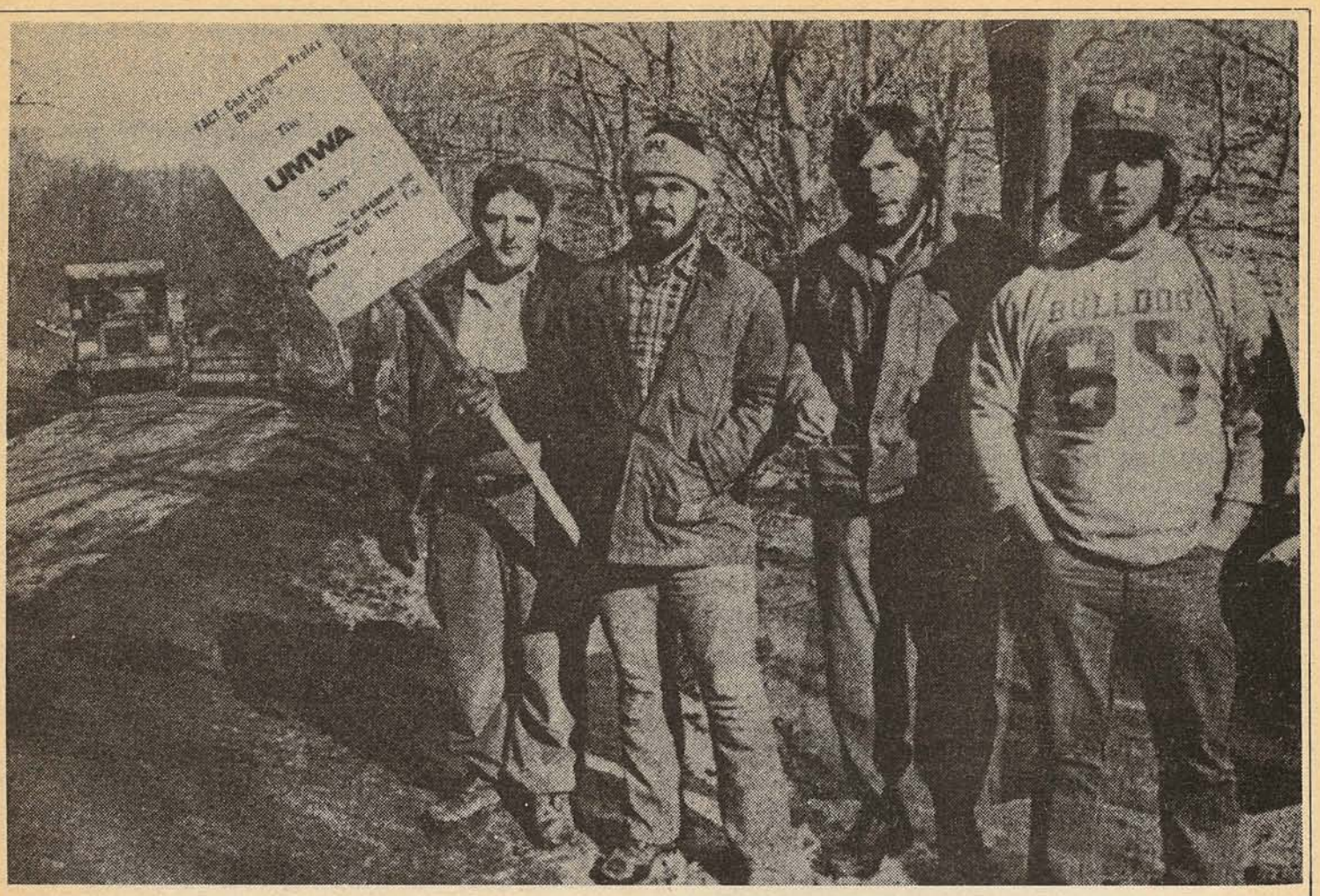
A Working Miner From Boone County, West Virginia Speaks:

Q: What is in the contract?

A: They [the coal operators] want the seven day work week, and they tell you which to work; [instead of] getting the welfare card back, some kind of insurance. You'd have to pay about all your doctor bill, $125 on hospital bills you have to pay yourself.

Q: What about the right to strike?

A: The right to strike, they dropped it, took it out. There was nothing in the proposal about it. They're going to give a week off for Christmas. They're taking stuff we had in the last contract, like voting days, and they're going to make you take them during Christmas and call it a Christmas shutdown. All they're really doing is telling you when to take off the days you already had. Really there's noth-



Young miners on strike are supported by retired miners who had to give up their pensions for the duration of the strike.

ing in it for us. It's a company-wrote contract, in my opinion.

Q: What's the most important thing in the strike to hold out for?

A: First of all, I'd have to say the welfare card. Equal out the pension plan (for young and old) that's right. Right now they've got a 50 pension plan and a 74. Right now, if you retire under the 50 pension plan, you'll get $200-225 a month, and if you retire under the 74, you'll get as high as $530. Too much difference in it. A guy who retires now will get twice as much as one who retired six years ago.

Q: Have the older miners who are not working now and had to give up their pension for the length of the strike, have they supported the younger miners on strike?

A: I'd have to say they are. They have lived here, born and raised. A lot of my grandfathers, old uncles and stuff is retired, and they get the $225-250 a month, and guys that retire today get $530, twice as much as my people did. And I'm for them all. I think they should all get $530.

Q: Would you be willing to give up the right to wildcat strike as part of a settlement?

A: I don't know. I guess I'm one of those guys who's whole hog or nothing.

Q: Anything else you'd like to say to people in the Chicago area so they'd best understand what it is the miners are asking for?

A: Public opinion is against the United Mine Workers on this whole thing. Papers are screaming everywhere, just like they're saying, "Put the dogs back in the hole. Let's go on with the country." It just seems that everywhere public opinion is against you. We need all the help we can get on this.

Q: Will Carter try to force the Taft-Hartley Law?

A: In my opinion, I believe he will. But I don't think it will work.

Fact Sheet On The Coal Strike

Question: Haven't the coal miners received the most generous pay increases in recent years?

FACT: From 1957 through 1977 the wages of coal miners have risen 160% while wages in the auto industry have risen 246%; in steel, 234%; in the airlines, 317%; and in construction, 235%. At the same time, coal has enjoyed a tremendous recent boom, and the employers have not even begun to share their good fortune with the miners. Since 1969, the price that the owners are paid for coal has increased from $4.99 per ton to $21.50 per ton in 1977, and the operators' labor costs per ton of coal mined have been reduced from 53.5% of the price in 1969 to 35% of the price in 1977. It is clearly wrong to say that the miners "have it good" compared to other workers on the basis of wages. But no wage increase could correct the worst injustices to coal miners which health and safety.

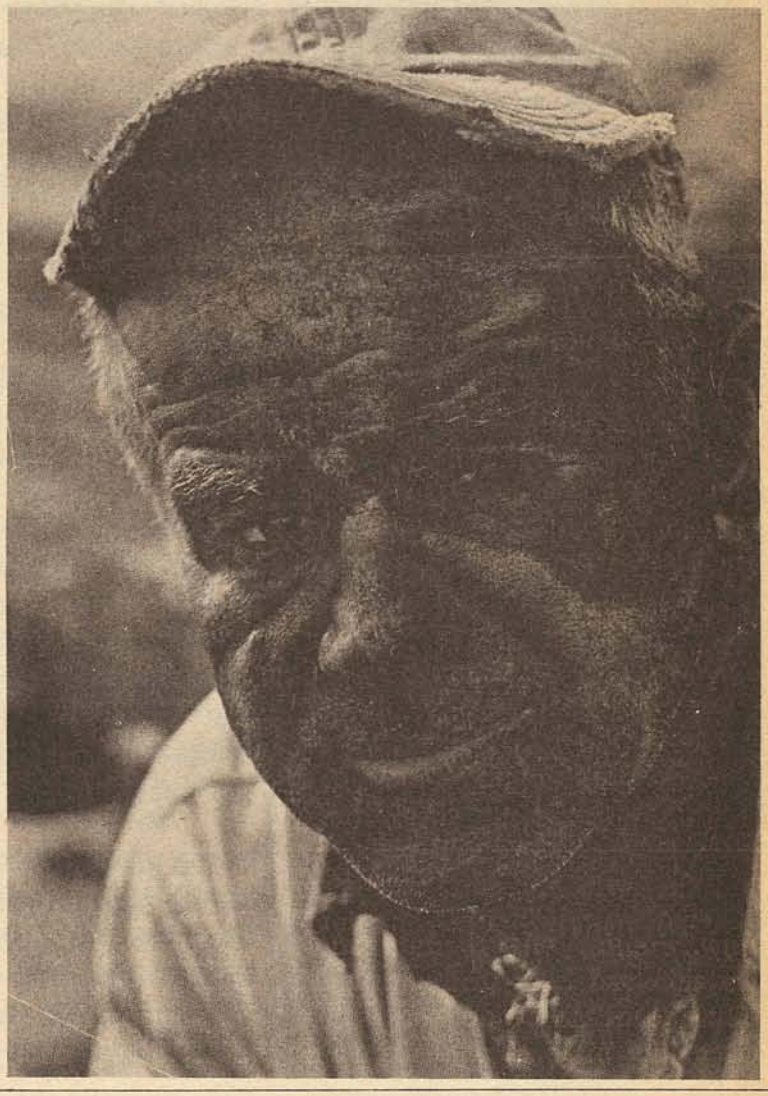
Question: Why do the miners insist on the right to strike at the local level (wildcat strikes)?

FACT: Many miners insist on calling it "the right to withdraw." This right to withdraw is based on the fact that coal mining is the most dangerous job in the country and that resorting to a local strike may be necessary to save miners' lives when other procedures fail. In the last ten years 2,000 miners have been killed. It is estimated that in the next 25 years, 4,700 will be killed and 351,000 disabled because of conditions in the mines. Coal miners in America are seven times more likely to be killed than the average American worker.

The "arbitrators" who are called in to deal with immediate grievances are rarely coal miners by background. They are usually well-to-do people with a natural tendency to side with the operators. The right to strike over local grievances without facing stiff fines is necessary to correct not only the operators' influence over arbitrators, but what is often their out and out control of the local courts in the coal fields.

Question: If the miners want their medical plan back instead of the coal operators' proposal of an insurance plan (in which the miners would bare much of the cost of medical care), don't they have to agree to accept fines for wildcat strikes? Isn't it the wildcat strikes of recent years that have cut production of coal and caused financial problems for the medical and pension fund?

FACT: The sudden crisis last summer that led to cutbacks in medical benefits could have been alleviated by certain transferrals of money from one fund to another. The refusal to do so



It is clearly wrong to say that miners "have it good" compared to other workers.

seems to have been based upon the operators' desire to blame "wildcat strikes" and attack the union. They hope that by attacking the existing medical plan, reducing its effectiveness for the miners, and blaming it on rank and file militancy, they can lure more miners into company unions and break the back of the UMWA.

The miners' right to strike is tied to the general demand that the right to safer and healthier conditions (including the right to medical care) become no less important than increasing productivity.

In general, since 1947 increase in productivity of miners has outstripped productivity increases in other industry (4.1 per hour for miners compared to 3.5 per hour for other industries). The miners' right to strike is tied to the general demand that the right to safer and healthier conditions (including the right to medical care) become no less important than increasing productivity. Since the operators have not nearly begun to give the miners their share of the benefits of the coal boom, they can begin by dipping into their profits to assure adequate medical coverage.

Question: Isn't the coal strike a case of 170,000 union miners grabbing the whole country "by the throat" by threatening a fuel crisis? Shouldn't they give in, in the interests of the majority?

FACT: All indications are that the BCOA wanted to force this strike on the miners as part of a plan to weaken and then destroy the UMWA so they would have a free hand in multiplying their profits without worrying about safety committees, union pension and medical plans, etc.

They know that miners will be forced by conditions to engage in wildcat strikes, and there is evidence that they have deliberately provoked them in the past. They figure if the union becomes divided over this and

Statement By The Chicago Area Black Lung Association On The Nationwide Coal Strike

The Chicago Area Black Lung Association, representing the many disabled coal miners and miners' widows who have migrated to the Chicago area, hereby extends its support and congratulations to the working UMWA coal miners who have resolved to hold firm and remain on strike until their right to organize and strike for control of working conditions at the local level and their right to an adequate medical and pension plan are recognized by the coal industry.

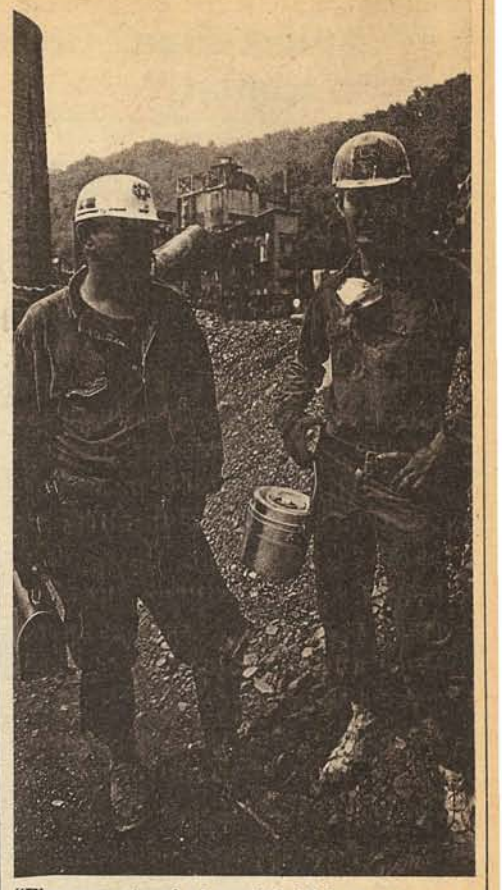
We older disabled coal miners remember what it was like to mine coal when there was no union — when the operators could tell you to go into an unsafe part of the mine and do some dirty job that you weren't being paid for and do it alone, increasing the danger to your life.

We remember the many "wildcat" strikes that such unsafe and unfair job assignments forced upon us. We remember how many miners died because of unsafe conditions, and we know how many are still dying. We remember how we had to hold union meetings in secret because the operators' thugs would shoot us for holding meetings on their property; and their "property" included not only the mines but our very homes and all the land surrounding it.

To our fellow Chicagoans we say: Do not be fooled by the press when they picture striking miners as the last "rugged individualist cowboys" or some other nonsense. The coal miners are hard working people who happen to be victims of the most dangerous occupation in the world, and because of the greed of the energy

becomes tied up fighting the fines imposed by the courts for wildcat strikes, it will not effectively be able to organize new miners, especially in the west, into the union. In 1974, 70% of the coal miners in the United States were in the UMWA. Today it is only 50%. The image of the UMWA as "big labor bosses" pushing the country around is completely contradicted by the facts. The UMWA is under attack and is fighting for its life.

On the other hand, the operators stranglehold is not only on the miners but on the poor and working people of the entire country, even the entire world. Who owns the coal mines of the United States of America? The "giants" in the BCOA are Consolidation Coal, owned by Continental Oil; Island Creek, owned by Occidental Petroleum and U.S. Steel. These are multi-million dollar energy monopolies which have consistently used their control over the sources of energy that keep the country going to dictate to the people everything from prices to policy on jobs and hiring, to foreign policy. There are many cases, such as American Electric Power in Ohio and West Virginia and Duke Power in North Carolina, where a utility company that rips off consumers is also a coal mine owner.



"The operators' stranglehold is not only on the miners but on the poor and working people of the entire country, even the entire world.

By sticking together in the strike, the miners have dealt a blow to the BCOA's plan to weaken the union.

Information for this article was provided by Dan Hendrickson of Mountain Life and Work *and* Coal Patrol *magazine.*□

monopolies who control the coal industry, there is a higher rate of mine accidents and a higher rate of deaths due to black lung disease in America, the richest nation in the world, than in many poorer nations.

Write to President Carter and tell him not to dare use the vicious Taft-Hartley law and thereby help the operators in their plan to weaken the union and bring back the good old days when coal was king and a miner was worth less than a mule.

Because we have struggled to survive both the coal fields and in the industrial cities, we know that what the miners win is a victory for all working and poor people, and what they lose if lost to all of us. Just last week, eight of our brothers at a Chicago tannery died because of the callous neglect of the employers and OSHA.

Come to the defense now, of the miners' right to organize for fair, safe and healthy working conditions. Your own life may also depend upon it.

Because we recognize that a shortage of coal would cause sufferings for many people, we say to the federal government: Put the blame where it belongs — upon the coal operators. The miners have already shown their willingness to put their faith in negotiations. When the medical benefits they need were suddenly cut, they agreed to end their wildcat strike showing their good faith in the upcoming contract negotiation. The coal operators have deliberately provoked this strike by refusing to restore to the miners what is rightfully theirs. Recognize the just proposals of the miners, and until the operators agree to them, take the mines from them, directly hiring the miners to work under all the conditions the miners have demanded and with all the profits going to the working miners. When the coal operators agree to what is right, then and only then should they be able to have the mines back.

"People's Plan" Calls For "Community Control Of Community Development"

HEART OF UPTOWN BLOCK CLUB COALITION SUBMITS PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT

Stunning both the city of Chicago and the federal government, representatives from the Heart of Uptown Block Club Coalition submitted their own proposal for the development of their community to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on February 2, 1978.

The unprecedented "People's Plan" provides for a block by block, building by building plan for the eight block area commonly referred to as the Heart of Uptown.

"We needed to develop our own plan," said Mabel Galloway, one of the representatives. "The city has been implementing their plan for years now, and it has only accomplished the destruction of our neighborhood." Calling for "community control of community development," the

Mabel Galloway, speaking at a meeting of the Heart of Uptown Block Club Coalition.

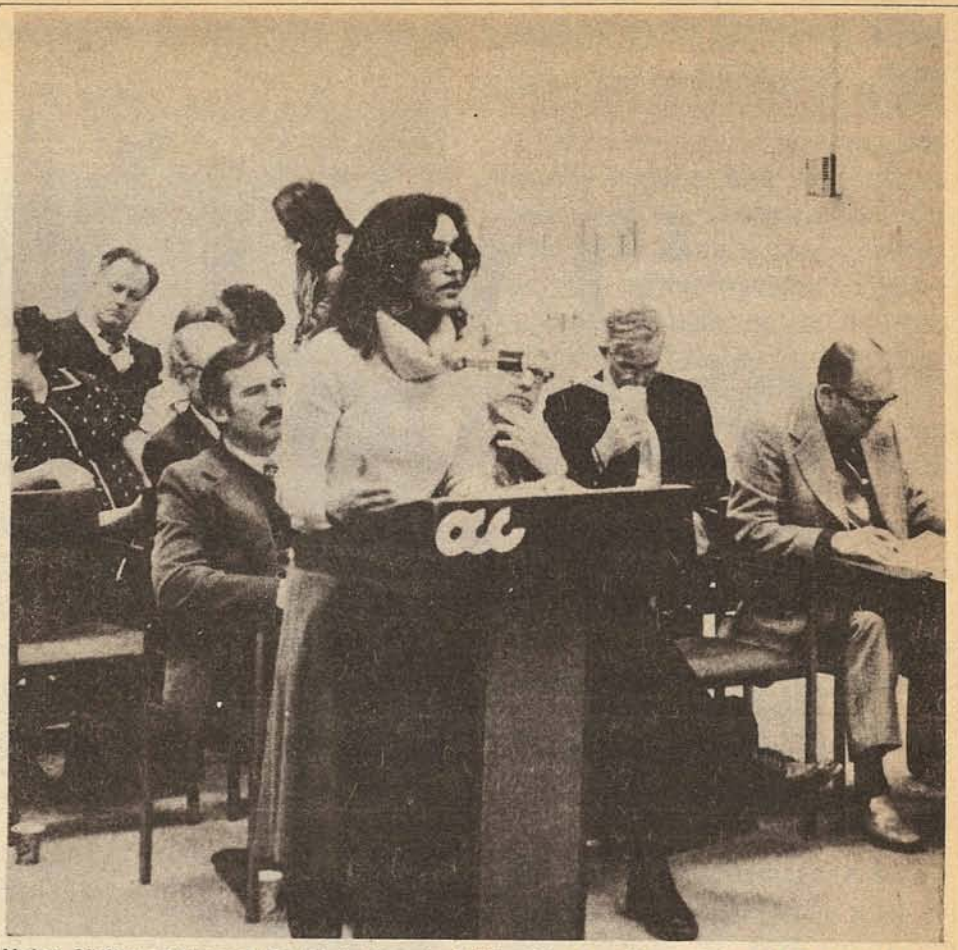
thorough proposal graphically illustrates both the necessity for and the methods by which the rehabilitation and development of the community can take place.

"What makes this proposal different from others is that the people themselves actually put it together," remarked one Coalition member. Indeed, the Coalition's plan was developed through a strategy designed to provide for the full participation of the community. Through surveys, door to door contact and a series of block club meetings, the Coalition developed plans for the following blocks:

4400 N. Racine
4400 N. Magnolia
4400 N. Malden
4500 N. Magnolia
4500 N. Malden
4600 N. Magnolia
4000-4300 blocks of N. Kenmore

While varying according to the specific conditions and needs of each block, the proposal asks for funding to assist landlords in the rehabilitation of their buildings, the purchasing of now vacant buildings in cooperation with private investors and the development of new housing and recreational facilities on the vacant lots which now occupy so much space in the area.

Coalition members argue that the $1.6 million proposal is actually a modest request and would be money well spent, money they say, which has already been given the city through various funding sources, and which the city obtained in the name of Uptown in the first place.



Helen Shiller addressed the State Board of Education on the problem of Truman College expansion consuming more and more low-income housing.

Helen Shiller, a leading member of the Coalition, blasted the city on the above point saying, "First the city applies for money in the name of our community. Whether it's for housing, schools or medical care doesn't really matter much because they never use it for those things anyway. In the end it is all used for the other set of plans they never tell anybody about. In Uptown, as in so many other communities across Chicago, they are using the money to drive us out of our homes and the city." Going on to explain what the Coalition can now expect, Ms. Shiller remarked, "HUD told us that the city would have to consider the plan first. Of course, we expect opposition from the city but then this city has always opposed a grassroots people's movement."

Confident that they are "far from being out of the picture," the two-month-old organization is now engaged in the struggle to implement the plan on a point by point basis. Coalition members point to their rapidly growing numbers and the willingness of the community to back the plan as proof of the proposal's validity. "This time it will be different," said Slim Coleman, chairman of the Heart of Uptown Block Club Coalition. "In the past they have always told us we need a plan if we don't like what's going on. Well, now we have a plan that gives the community a chance to grow again. We even told them how a factory could be built to provide some jobs. We have done everything a serious government could ask for."□

KEEP STRONG Editor Helen Shiller Announces Candidacy For 46th Ward Alderperson

"I WILL TAKE OUR COMMUNITY STRUGGLES INTO THE CITY COUNCIL"

I am announcing my candidacy for 46th ward Alderperson in the upcoming May 16 special election. Certainly, I am not taking on this task out of a desire to sit elegantly among the mostly mechanical men who sit now in city hall. Rather, I'm running because it is only logical that someone who has worked these long years in the communities of our ward must carry the community struggle into the city council. We could stand to go a few months without an alderman, since we were not represented by our former alderman anyway. But we cannot take the slap in the face of yet another machine hack in our seat in the city council, riding over the continued destruction of our neighborhoods.

My campaign will bring forth many issues, but most of all it will show that there are two 46th wards: a ward of the developers and large property owners, and a ward of the people. The first is the ward that appears in city planning documents, and it has been amply represented by professional politicians. The other is a ward of people who have been pushed and shoved around, purposefully neglected and intentionally mistreated. This campaign will decisively and conclusively win representation of the second 46th ward, the ward of the people who live in it.

Let me turn briefly to some of the issues, because this will

definitely be an issue oriented campaign.

First of all, there is the city's gross misuse of federal monies. The city has followed a pattern of obtaining monies from the federal government on the basis of certain high-need communities, including many communities in our ward, and then has spent this money in other areas of the city to help line the pockets of the large developers and bankers who have the ear of the mayor. Although the most recent example of this was the school board's outrageous decision to distribute money earmarked for disadvantaged children throughout the entire bureaucratic morass of public education in Chicago, there are examples equally serious in the areas of housing, economic development, job training, criminal justice and public health.

Second, I will stress the communities' "overlooked" right to participate in the planning process. My campaign will demonstrate that present city policy is aimed at the elimination, not the improvement of large sections of the ward while obviously, there has been no citizen input into this decision. And as this ward's representative in the city council, I will fight for the protection of our communities which a responsible and accountable zoning process can provide. I intend to use my office to assist and bring legitimacy to processes of block by block, grassroots development of needs assessments and programs that I have helped to develop in the Heart of Uptown Block Club Coalition area already.

I will introduce a tenant's bill of rights to protect large families in low-income housing, as well as senior citizens on fixed incomes threatened by condominium conversions. I will fight for local control of police and the disarming of off-duty police. I will introduce ordinances that force the Board of Health to work cooperatively with the Cook County Hospital medical system and to develop the extensive occupational health and safety programs that would have averted the recent disaster at Horween Tannery. I will also introduce a rehab housing code that makes rehabilitation of Chicago's dwindling housing stock more possible, and ordinances aimed at the protection of small businesses and small landlords in our neighborhoods.

I believe that I am qualified, and evidently hundreds of key supporters also believe I am qualified, because of my record of community involvement, community service and responsible, investigative journalism. But most important, I am qualified for this office because I have a proven record of community accountability. And that will be a breath of fresh air, perhaps best to be provided by the only independent woman in the council.

I believe that this will be an exciting campaign, in itself, that will raise issues that penetrate the stone wall of State Street power and force the city to remember the thousands of forgotten people in our ward. But it will also be a winning campaign.

For the first time in the history of this ward there now exists a powerful network of grassroots activists who take their community responsibilities seriously every day of their lives, not just on the weekends, and who take their political responsibilities on a more consistent basis, year in and year out, than the sickly ward political machine. I am proud to be the standard bearer in this election for many of these dedicated activists in every section of the ward. Together we will raise an army of election workers that will exceed a thousand people by election day. And together we will win representation for the "other" 46th ward, the ward of the people who live in it.

I am going to carry the struggles of our communities into the city council.

Thank you.□

Downtown Community Organizes To Save Low-Income Housing And Local Businesses

PEOPLE SAY NO TO "AUTO ROW"

"A fight they won't forget soon." "It's that Davenport [city manager Gerald Davenport]. What's he trying to do, anyway? When is he going to wake up and realize that downtown is dead?" "I don't live here all the time. I just stay here when there is work [field work] around. A lot of people like fruit and vegetables, but they don't know where the vegetables come from. We are the people that pick them. You think I eat vegetables? I can't afford them. They don't want us to live in the city. They want us to live in the camps."

— Residents of Stockton's proposed "auto row" area.

This street in central Stockton is part of an area where the city plans to buy the land, tear the buildings down and then re-sell parcels to car dealers.

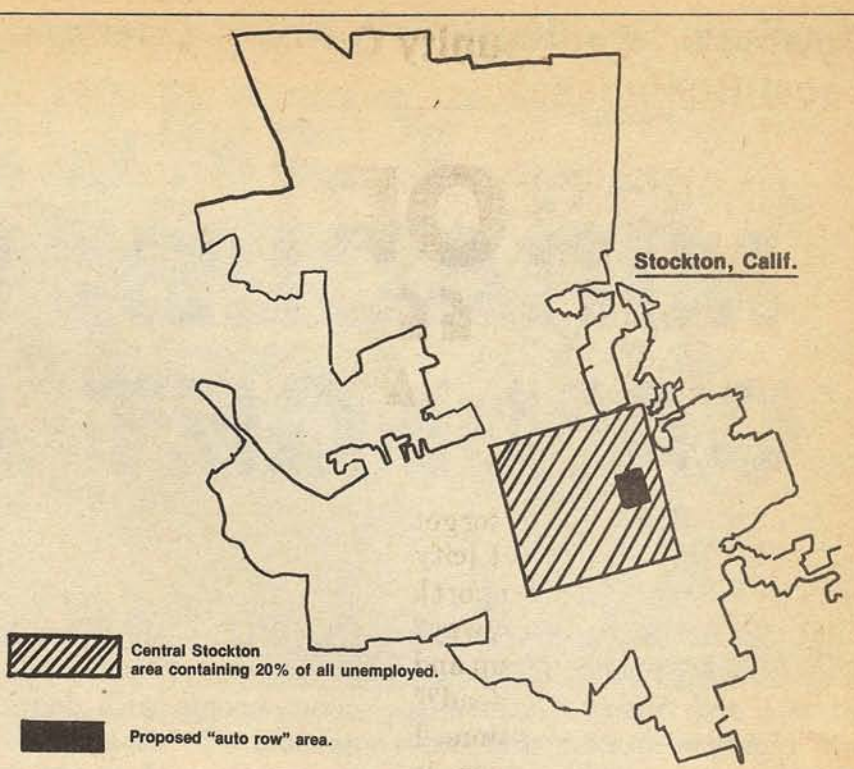
The city of Stockton is studying a plan to redevelop the 15 block area east of the central business district, from Stanislaus to Sacramento and Miner to Washington Streets. According to the plan, the city would buy the land, tear the buildings down and then re-sell parcels to the new car dealers. And the response of those people who would be affected is a positive "no." City leaders, city manager Gerald Davenport, community development director Ed Griffin, and Ed Coy, executive director of the Downtown Stockton Associates, among others, have argued that the redevelopment plan is a "dynamic opportunity to keep the downtown area alive." Citing the movement of many stores away from the downtown, they predict that the main business district will soon become a "ghost town" if the car dealers make good on their threat to move north. The redevelopment would be paid for by the sale of bonds, and the bonds would be repaid with the excess taxes on the land after the car dealers buy it from the city.

But a coalition of community residents, business people, church leaders and community organizations opposed to the plan is quickly growing, and the growing coalition carries an arsenal of weapons into the fight. Opponents of the plan argue that the area has over 240 units of low-income housing, all of which would eventually be destroyed in redevelopment. A majority of the residents are senior citizens, living on fixed and limited incomes. The vacancy rates in other low-income

neighborhoods average only 2%. They point out that the removal of some 75 local businesses will cause the loss of several hundred jobs from the area. They go on to say that the real cause of the downtown troubles is unemployment. A report issued by the Stockton chapter of the Intercommunal Survival Committee states, "The city's own figures have indicated how severe the problem is. A report published by the city planning department using 1970 census figures indicates that almost 20% of all the unemployed people in Stockton live in the area bounded by Harding, Wilson, Charter and Pershing (Stockton's central area). The average rate of unemployment for neighborhoods within that area was 13.5%, almost five points higher than the rate for the city as a whole at that time. Clearly the situation has grown worse in the last eight years."

Many people who have been in the area for a while agree that business is bad downtown because most of the people who live around it have been out of work for too long. A senior citizen who has lived in the heart of the community for over 20 years blames the city administration for the downtown crisis. "If they wanted to keep the downtown alive, then the city had better take some big steps real soon to give these people the jobs they need."

Community sentiment, however, is strongest on another point. The removal of almost 500 area residents and 75 local institutions and businesses will benefit only the car dealers. Sources say the project will cost much more than the $8 million spent on the West End Project 15 years ago, not to mention hundreds of thousands of dollars in higher rents that the displaced residents will pay in the next five to ten years. The car dealers have promised only that they would move into the area if the city redeveloped it.



Other objections to the plan mentioned by residents and business people are: the people who have shown the longest commitment to keep downtown alive will be rewarded with forced evictions; the city does not plan to consult community residents until after the decision has been made to go ahead with the destruction; many of the older people who live in the area already spend more than 25% of their income on rent. This percentage will surely shoot up 45% when so many are forced to move at once; the city's relocation record is poor. Although over 1500 people lived in the West End area, the city was able to relocate only 350; there were 320 businesses, and less than 40% stayed in business after they were forced to move out.

While it is true that the proposal, if implemented, would equal a multi-million dollar gift to six or seven car dealers, those who stand against it say their campaign has only just begun, and promise there will be no "auto row." Community workers from the Intercommunal Survival Committee have begun a door-to-door canvass of the neighborhood to keep people informed of the city's moves.

The call for a community hearing in March has grown louder, and several groups have already begun to plan for one. Also, KEEP STRONG has learned that the Community Advisory Board of California Rural Legal Assistance has begun an investigation of the plan and is looking for area residents to become plaintiffs in a lawsuit to stop the redevelopment.□

Stockton Residents Talk About Unemployment

MIRACLE: WHERE CAN I GET A JOB ?

On the east side of Stockton is a neighborhood called Okietown. Dwight and Sandy Mackenzie, and Sandy's brother Bill talk about unemployment.

DWIGHT: "I've worked ever since I was a kid. When I was ten I was picking cotton in Louisiana. It's hard to find work now. You go out to the farms looking for a job, and they tell you they can hire the Mexicans cheaper. If I try to get a job I'm qualified for (I'm a painter), they say you got to belong to the union. When you go to join the union, they say you have to join when you're on the job. It comes down to this — you've got to know someone. If you got money, you can go up to a guy in the union and offer him a couple hundred to get you in. He'll take the money because it's under the table."

SANDY: "I've been out to the unemployment office twice to apply for a cannery job. They say you need proof of prior experience. How am I going to get experience if I can't get a job in the first place? Carter says unemployment is down, but I don't see things getting any better."

DWIGHT: "He's not talking about people like us. He's talking about people with degrees who get laid off. It's no problem for them when they get laid off. They got money put away. They collect unemployment. Carter don't know what he's talking about."

BILL: "They're taking a lot of farmland around here and building houses on it, and then the city annexes it. People are losing work because of that. But you think the city cares? You know, there's a lot of people who would make damn good workers if they got a chance. But these employers, they only want experience. What are we supposed to do? They got to sit down and take the time to train people. What we need is more on-the-job training programs."

DWIGHT: "Look, I'm on the WIN program. They're supposed

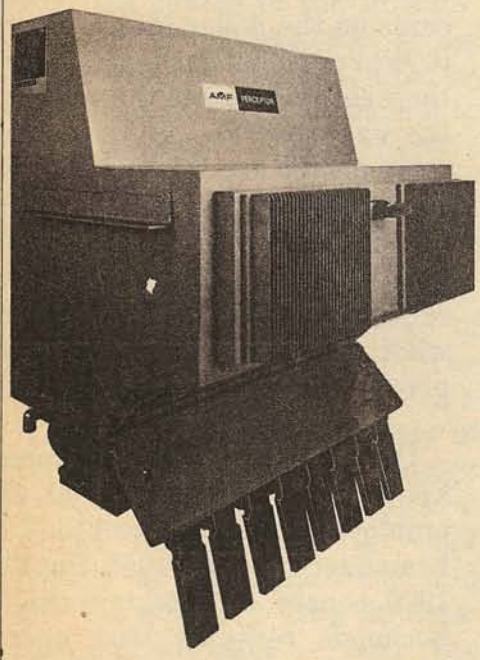
Bill (standing), Sandy and Dwight Mackenzie with their children (seated).

to be helping me get a job. I've been down there to talk with the woman. She tells me I have to go out and look for a job. What kind of help is that? They say they want me to get off welfare. I asked them to help me get off, get a little painting business started. If I only had a few dollars to put into it, I swear I'd only hire people without experience. I can teach you to paint in 30 minutes. Welfare says they can't help me."

SANDY: "If you try to save some money on welfare, they threaten to cut you off."

DWIGHT: "The rich people are way up there, and we're down here. They're not going to give us a break, they're not going to let us move one inch. It'll probably take a war to straighten this mess out."

If there has ever been a topic that could bring fire to the eyes of an otherwise quiet man, it is



During the summer of 1977, 11,000 jobs were eliminated due to the introduction of the electronic eye in tomato harvesting.

"The cause of major unemployment in California's rich Central Valley is not a mystery at all." The sign above reflects the motives of agribusiness moving to automation.

unemployment. Rarely have wars caused as many children to suffer from hunger. Rarely has any tyrant who has walked the earth torn apart so many families or brought heartache to the insides of so many mothers as the growing crisis of unemployment which divides this country. Unemployment means the same thing to people in California as it does everywhere else — running out of food the last week of the month, worrying every night that they are going to come and repossess your car, knowing all the money you have wouldn't buy a bus ticket home.

Every nickel and dime politician that runs for office out here finds a scapegoat for people being out of work. Some blame the Mexicans. Some say the minimum wage is too high. Others who are bolder would have us believe that too many people are lazy. Every time you pick up the paper or turn on the television somebody is running his mouth about this big mystery. But the cause of major unemployment in California's rich Central Valley is not a mystery at all. It is a series of facts that elected leaders have failed to state out front.

Fact— The University of California spent $2 million in research in 1977 to develop machines which would replace field workers.

Fact— The California State Assembly Office of Research reports that 11,000 jobs were eliminated in the summer of 1977 due to the introduction of the electronic eye in tomato harvesting.

Fact— Button-Johnson, one of the makers of the new tomato harvester sorter, boasts that it replaces 20 workers who can sort 35 tons of tomatoes per hour.

Fact— The AMF Corporation, "with 75 years experience in industrial automation," makes

The Button-Johnson tomato harvester, along with other highly technological farm equipment, will eliminate over 120,000 jobs in the next ten years.

another version of the tomato harvester which can be "installed on any make, model or year harvester." It sorts 50 tons of tomatoes per hour.

Fact— The Upright Harvester Company of Selwyn, California sells a machine called the western grape harvester, which picks 18 tons of grapes per hour.

Fact— The United Farmworkers Union reports that over 120,000 jobs will be eliminated in the next ten years due to mechanization: 40,000 jobs in tomatoes, 24,000 jobs in wine grapes, 10,000 jobs in lettuce, 50,000 jobs in other crops.

Fact— Altogether, one third to one half of the farm work force will be forced out of work in 13 different crops.

Fact— The Bank of America will lend $2.5 billion to growers in 1978 in California. This money will allow the growers to buy or lease these machines and others like them which are described above. The bank promises the growers, "We are in agriculture to stay. We have the agricultural experience and the financial expertise to back you up."

Unemployment in California's Central Valley is a plan, a blueprint for the 1980's. It is one of several strands in a master cable being laid from San Diego to the Oregon border. When the cable is completed, 80% of the people will be on one side, and everything they need to survive will be on the other side. Those who are short of sight and believe that the merger of the banks and the growers will only hurt the migrant workers and the campesinos should listen more carefully to Dwight Mackenzie. The writing on the wall couldn't be more clear with a neon sign. As workers become expendable and are driven from the fields and canneries and warehouses, they lose their ability to purchase goods and services. Anybody trying to make a living in the community fixing roofs, pumping gas, cutting hair, waiting tables or fixing cars, will find the days long and the money short.

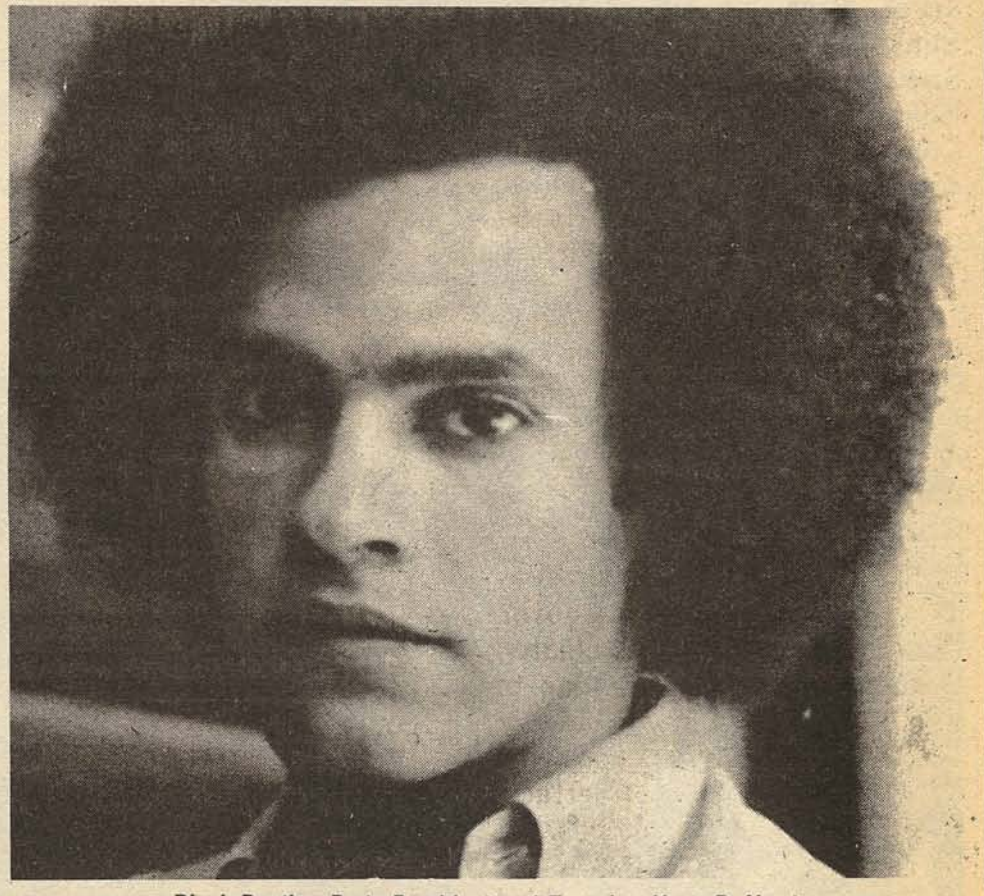
The banks that have been so generous to some have treacherously ignored others. Thousands of small businesses that barely survive on the margins of agribusiness go under every year because the only money available to borrow carries an 18 cents on the dollar interest with it. When the businesses go under their employees join the ranks of the expendables. As more and more people are driven from the work force, whole communities become expendable. It is not long after that that the master cable separating the people from what they need lies firmly in place.

One final fact — it is common knowledge that the official unemployment rate in Stockton has been over 6% since 1955. But the 1970 census of Stockton neighborhoods revealed that unemployment was greater than 10% in over half the city.□

Oui Magazine Interview With Black Panther Party President

A CONVERSATION WITH HUEY P. NEWTON

Below, KEEP STRONG *reprints an in-depth interview conducted by* Oui *magazine with Black Panther Party President, Founder and chief theoretician Huey P. Newton.*



Black Panther Party President and Founder, Huey P. Newton.

QUESTION: What pressures prompted you to flee the U.S. in 1974?

HUEY: Well, first of all I was informed that there was a $10,000 contract out on my life. And the source of the information was a strange one — the police chief of Oakland, Charles Gain. He said it in a statement to my attorney.

Q: Why did he tell you this?

HUEY: You'd have to ask him. Who knows what tangle of motives he could have had? The source of the contact, apparently, was the narcotics dealers of Oakland. They were very upset by the Panthers' campaign against heroin. This is what friends in the community told me. We got very little information out of Gain — only the promise that he would investigate further.

But the worst problem, in some ways, wasn't the contract. I had been tailed for most of my adult life, and the effect was both exhausting and terrifying. People think you're being paranoid when you describe these situations to them. FBI agents would tail me everywhere — into a grocery store or a doughnut shop. When they followed me in a car, it was always bumper-to-bumper. This wasn't just local. This was everywhere. Their blatant lack of discretion would be difficult to exaggerate. When

I arrived in Cuba, one of the difficulties of adjustment was that virtually for the first time in my life I wasn't being followed. It took a while for me to relax and drop my continual vigilance.

Q: You didn't meet Castro while you were in Cuba. Why not?

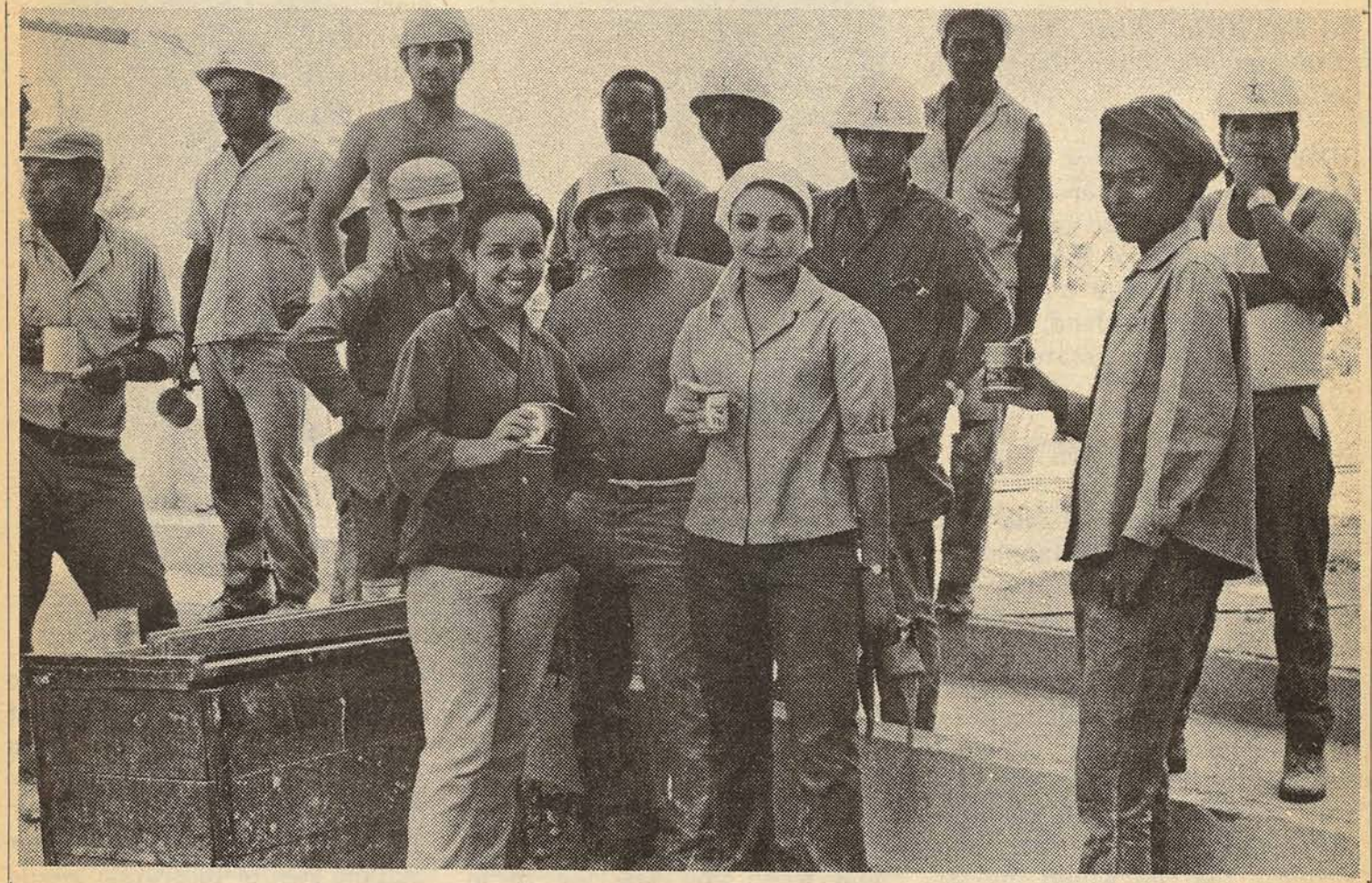
HUEY: I didn't ask to meet him and I guess he didn't ask to meet me, which is just fine. I think it's very impolite to go into someone's country and ask to meet their head of state. The question never came up really, but I think that after Robert Williams, Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver all denounced Cuba, the government was somewhat apprehensive about giving too much exposure to the so-called North American revolutionaries.

Q: Did you feel welcome in Cuba?

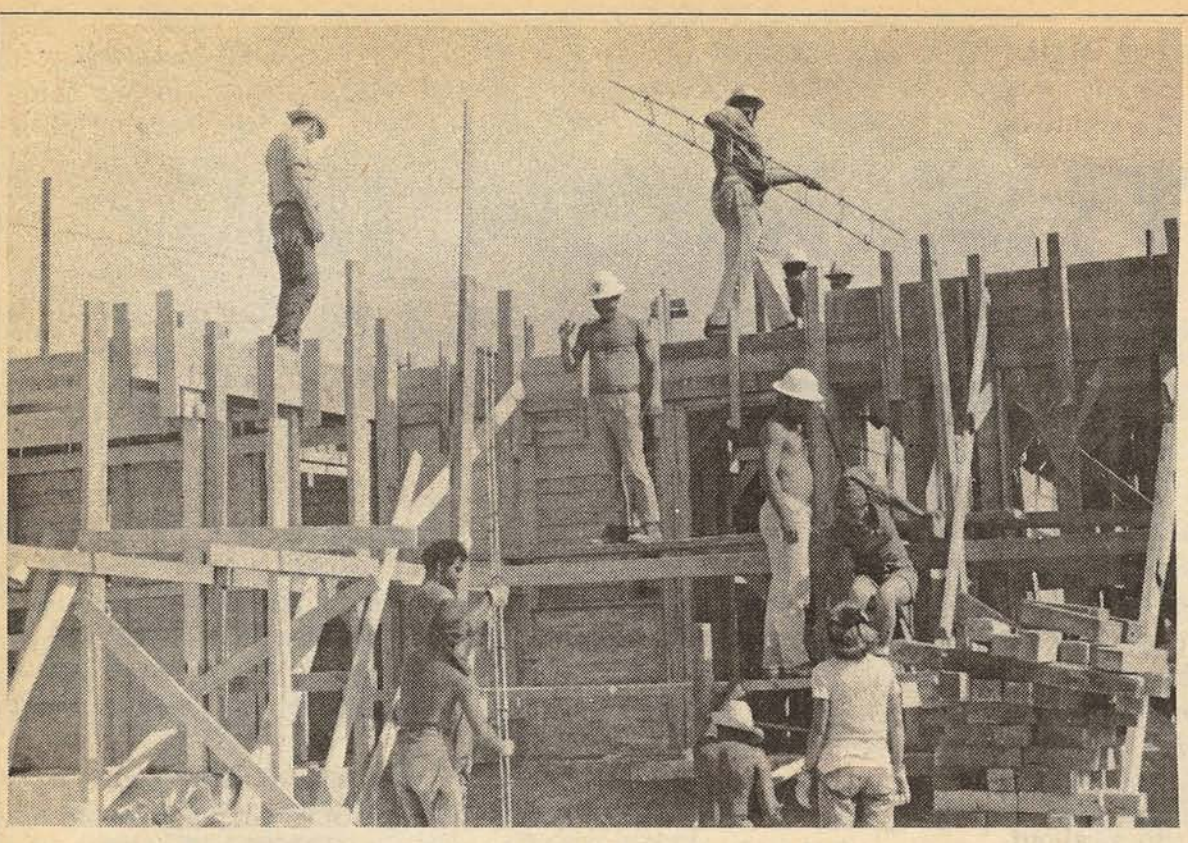
HUEY: Yes. When I first got there, they gave me a grand tour of the provinces, showed me all the schools and universities, construction sites, clinics, dams, and coffee and sugar production. They offered me a job as a university teacher, but I preferred to work in a cement factory.

Q: Why?

HUEY: Primarily to enhance my own understanding of the people. It was essentially a very good experience. Hard labor in Cuba is a very different thing from hard labor in United States. In Cuba, a job is not only a job; it also becomes the very center of communication. We ended up spending weekends at the beach with our co-workers, who were like an extended family. When our toilet broke down, for example, I immediately went into a panic. I asked my wife, "Who do we call? Where is the central agency? What do we do?" When we explained our problem to the people who shared our apartment building, they told us to report the problem to our fellow workers. I did, and some of the workers who knew about plumbing came out and repaired the toilet. I asked if I should pay. They said,



"Hard labor in Cuba is a very different thing from hard labor in the United States. In Cuba, a job is not only a job; it also becomes the very center of communication."



"If you create an environment where people depend on each other...people will behave in a different way."

"No, but when something breaks down in our home we would like you to help us." I had undergone the collective experience.

Q: Do you think that the reason this could not work here is because of our form of government, or because Americans have a history of isolating themselves from each other?

HUEY: Both interract to the point of being inseparable. If you create an environment where people are taught that they must supersede others in order to be happy, that will naturally breed mutual alienation. If you create an environment where people depend on each other, an environment where you promote cooperation rather than competition, then people will behave in a different way.

Q: But there are managers or "bosses" in Cuba, too.

HUEY: Yes, but the chief function of these managers is to do the administrative work. If changes are made on the job, it's done only with the consent of the workers.

Q: Is there a disparity in income between manager and worker?

HUEY: There is a difference in pay scales, but the difference isn't great: the lowest pay is 120 pesos a month, the highest is 400. Fidel gets 400. The average is roughly 250. I earned about 220.

Q: Are those who earn 150 a month envious of those who earn 250?

HUEY: Well, each job provides a school; the worker can go to school for two hours, three days a week, and promote himself in his job area. There is some competition, obviously, but it's not like it is here. The framework of the competition is friendlier. First of all, everyone is able to get his basic food. For a family of four you spend about 27 pesos a month. Rationing limits the extent of competition. I liked Cuba. You don't have the developed sense of community here. It's hard to communicate the reasons why the Cuban people can feel so much joy in long hours of work with so little pay.

Q: Why did you choose to live in Cuba rather than in China?

HUEY: The Chinese culture is too different. I didn't feel at home when I visited China, although I appreciated what they share together. I appreciated the socialist state.□

To be continued.

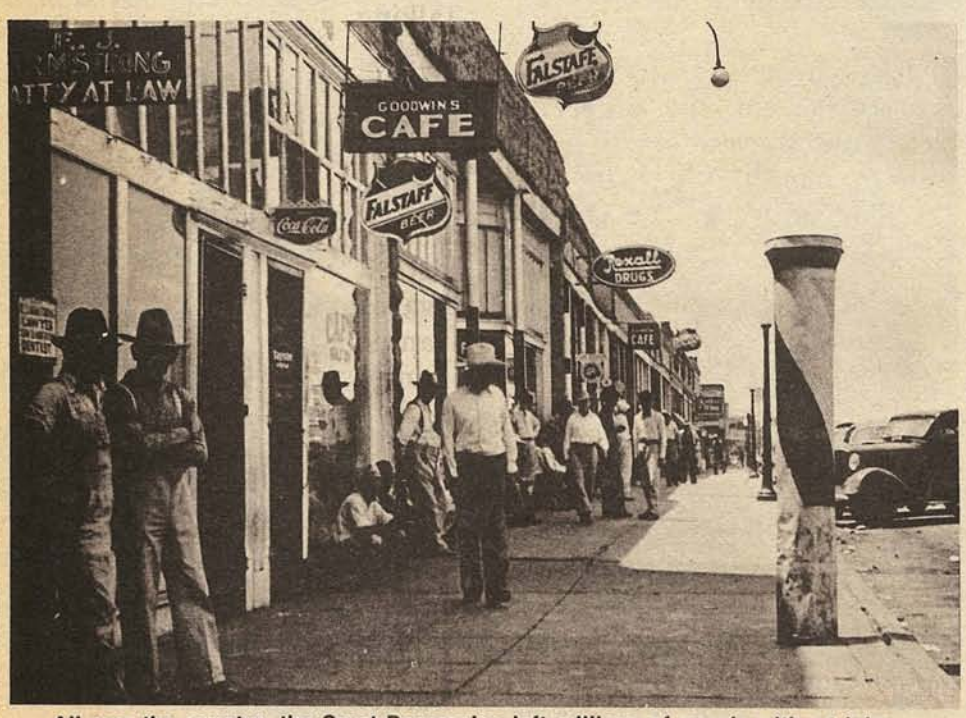
Interview With A Fourth Generation Irish-American — Conclusion

THE IRISH IN NEW YORK

In this conclusion to the first of a series of interviews with people reflecting on their cultural background and history, Grace Meehan talks about the importance of learning and remembering our true history. Grace is a fourth generation Irish-American who has lived in the Brooklyn community of Greenpoint most of her life.

Q: How long did your father being in and out of work go on — did it start during the Depression?

GM: It started about 1935, and in 1941, he answered an ad in the paper for a job in Greenpoint. It was a foundry job. After Pearl Harbor, the two men that owned this factory (on Banker Street off Norman Avenue) had an opportunity to get war contracts to make plane parts and bombs. They didn't have the knowledge, so my father became a partner without money, because he had the knowledge. You see, starting in the foundry, in the brass and bronze line, although he got into sculpture later, he had the basic knowledge, he had the foundation. So, even though he was working with magnesium, which was a very inflammable material, he knew just how to set it up. By the time the war was in full swing, they had the plants going 24 hours a day. It was government controlled.



All over the country, the Great Depression left millions of people without jobs.

Had one of these plants blown up, all of Greenpoint would have gone, so they had to have their own fire detail. They would call the fire department, but they had to stay outside. They couldn't go in because you can't put water on magnesium. They had their own chemicals and their own fire squadron. But most of the men were very scared, and very often my father was left alone to fight the fire. One time he was trapped in a circle of flames, but thank God, he got out of that one.

Q: That's when your family moved to Greenpoint?

GM: They moved here December 20, 1944 because he was working and traveling, so my mother wanted to move to Greenpoint.

Q: You said your father was a union organizer?

GM: This was back around 1915. It was a bloodbath. These people were not going to give up

"My father would organize a strike in the shop, and everyone would walk out. He became infamous with the owners and was blacklisted."

control. No one was trying to take over the business of the man that owned it. They just wanted a decent livelihood. They wanted decent working conditions. They wanted to be able to have a decent lunch hour, a day off. I mean people worked seven days a week, sixteen hours a day. Of course, there was a lot of opposition to this — it was very very dangerous, and a lot of people were killed. My father was one of the lucky ones.

This goes back to what I was saying about the women — it was a disgrace for women to work. Since my mother didn't have any children (at this time), she went back to work, and she had to take off her wedding ring so they thought she was single. My father was blacklisted. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't be blacklisted. He was blacklisted then, people were blacklisted in the fifties, and I'm sure that under certain circumstances in certain areas, people are blacklisted today.

Q: He was blacklisted for being an organizer?

GM: Yes, before he opened his own business. He organized the first shop he was in, which made it very hard for my granddaddy because the owners didn't fire him because he had been there so long. But they said, "Your son is a rabble rouser, a trouble maker. I mean everybody's happy, what's he doing? We give you a turkey every Christmas."

So, after he organized that shop, he left. He did this on his own; he did not belong to any organization. In time he became known. Then he would get a job in another shop, and he would feel them out mentally and emotionally, and when he got enough to go along with him, he would get up in the middle of the day (usually he timed it when they had a lot of orders), and he would say, "I call a strike," and everyone would walk out. He became infamous with the owners, and he was blacklisted.

He was out of work more than he was in work. My mother admired him. She was proud of him, but there was two sides to the coin. Of course there was a money loss, but she helped out. They always kept going, they always had more than enough, until the '30's.

Q: Grace, before you were talking about the history of the Irish people when they came to this country. Why aren't we taught their true history when we go to school?

GM: Well, I guess the original historians didn't want us to be aware of a lot of things. They wanted us to feel that we were living in a virtual paradise, and while we do live much better than a lot of people on the planet earth, there are a lot of people here who live much better than others. I'm referring to the inequities.

Now I don't feel that if you worked hard all your life you

have to give everything away to somebody else who just sat back and never did anything, never tried. But I do feel that if you go back to our original constitution, it has never been put into effect to its fullest, to the way it's supposed to be. It's like so many of the programs now. On paper, they look beautiful, but write a letter, make a phone call or go in person. They not only don't exist, you're lucky if you don't meet with tremendous hostility.

There's arrogance among a lot of the people who are in positions in various organizations — city, state, federal, private — who are getting paid to help people. They don't want to work. They want to get paid to read their *New York Times* from nine to ten, have a coffee break from ten to eleven, go to lunch from noon to one and go skiing for the weekend. So, this business in the '30's, where you were poor but clean, that don't work now. They don't want to see you with your clean, pressed, patched-up outfit. It annoys them, gives them a trauma.

"There's arrogance among a lot of the people in various city, state and federal organizations who are getting paid to help people, but don't want to work."

Grace Meehan: "I learned a lot about history through my Black friends. I never knew there were Black heroes in the Revolutionary War."

I learned a lot about history through my Black friends. I never knew that there were Black heroes in the Revolutionary War, in the Civil War, in many wars. If we knew the whole story from beginning to end, we couldn't split the people. Let's face it, if you put babies of any nationality, any complexion, any religion together, then they will have a ball.

The people who start separations are people like Hearn's Department Store, who do it for their own benefit, to keep the "haves" having and the "have-nots " not having. So, if you have history in its purest form, the way it should be, then you'd say, well, we as people were here way back, 1600, fighting in the war, why are they second class citizens today? (I'm referring to the Black community now.) You'd say, if to be White is to have it made, why are there so many poor Whites starving?

The resentment that people feel against the Puerto Ricans and the Blacks that have been here 300 years, and the resentment they feel against the Irish —

Q: Which people feel this resentment?

GM: The people that have been here for many generations and feel that any new arrival is an outsider, forgetting also that their ancestor was (at one time) a new arrival, people who fear

the unknown, who fear somebody else's culture. For example, you offer something to eat, "No, thank you, I don't like it...." "Did you ever taste it?" "No, but I don't like it."

So, anything new is strange, anything strange is something to fear. Fear breeds hostility. The new arrival fears the hostility and becomes hostile in turn.

The poor Black American who has really been suspended between Heaven and Hell feels it. It's so similar. I guess the similarity is the resentment that people feel about them, the poverty that they are going through, especially for a couple whose children are born here, and all of a sudden their children are so Americanized, and it's different than their values. It's the same in that respect.

But getting back to the original question, if you knew the whole story from beginning to end, you would not have a lot of the problems that we have now. We would have brotherhood, the way it's supposed to be, where all men are of one family, God's family. And, while families have little scraps, they always make it up. And they work together...that's it, work together, help each other, don't hurt anybody. A hungry stoach is a hungry stomach in anybody.

So, if you don't know the whole story, you go on misconceptions, you go on old wives' tales, you go on myths, that keep you from progressing, keep you from helping each other from being a community of God-fearing people that love each other. Well, let's face it, there would be no corruption, and if you didn't have corruption, you wouldn't have people making a lot of money, and the Swiss banks wouldn't be doing very well.

Q: What lessons can be learned from the history of struggle of the Irish people?

GM: Well, the first lesson that we Irish-Americans, or Yankee Irish, as we're called if we're second, third or fourth generation, the first lesson we can learn is forgetting: stop forgetting our heritage, stop forgetting how we started out. You see, we've done a good job of forgetting. We've forgotten so well that our own people are an embarrassment to us if they need help. You either have it, you can get it, or you don't have it. If you don't have it, keep quiet, don't embarrass your own people by letting one person from another group or the world know that you haven't got it made, that you are not part of the elite....Be a nice gal

"If you don't know the whole story, you go on misconceptions; you go on old wives' tales that keep you from progressing; keep you from being a community."

or guy, and if the gas isn't turned off, quietly put your head in the oven.

That's the first lesson we can learn — stop forgetting. Stop saying that Grandma and Grandpa came over on the Queen Elizabeth (or the Queen Elizabeth's ancestor). Remember that when they came here they thought that the streets of New York were paved with gold.

Q: What did they find?

GM: They found that if they were lucky, they were a servant girl or a hod-carrier. They found out that they weren't accepted.

Q: What kind of similarities are there between the way poor White people lived and the way Black and Puerto Rican people have lived?

GM: As far as the Puerto Rican people, the Hispanic people, it's similar in the fact that they left their homeland because of poverty and came to better their standard of living.

It's different in the respect that there are more programs now, more help now, although it's akin to a pint of water in the Sahara Desert, and I don't think that's really a bad example because it's true, and the people are still living badly.

There's too much corruption. The money might be there, but the people that need it aren't getting it. There needs to be a house cleaning. It has been on the T.V. news that people with very well-paying jobs are on welfare, collecting it in another borough. Why? How does this happen? There must be some people that are getting paid to watch this.

Also, getting back to another similarity, when they had the WPA, now those men, including my father, they worked out with a pick and shovel, or he worked as a watchman, and no one gave him a coat, and there were very cold winters. I remember one time he was a watchman, and where he was watching the construction, there were rats bigger than my cat. And the little sandwich that he had with his thermos of coffee, he shared with the rats because he was afraid of the rats, and he kept his lamp lit.

Grace Meehan: "There's too much corruption. The money might be there, but the people that need it aren't getting it."

"...they came to better their standard of living."

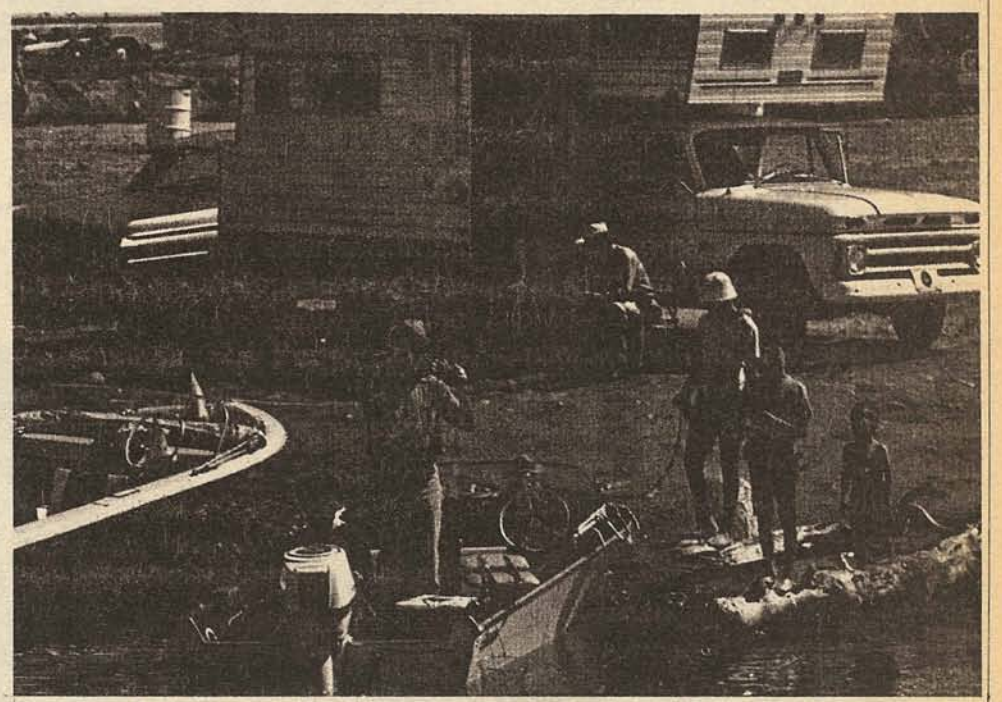
So, that's one reason today it's better. They're not going through it, but there's a lot more to be done. Not lip service, do it. You don't tell somebody, who is more than uptight, that the whole world is crashing in on, to think positive, because personally I think that is a little idiotic. That's like being in a burning building and telling someone, don't go out and don't call the fire department. Think positive!□

Comment: By ISC National Coordinator, Slim Coleman

"AMERICA, YOU ARE YOUNGSTOWN"

Massive Steel Shutdowns Provoke Questions About Economy

Until a few months ago, Youngstown, Ohio was an American city with problems that could be called small. Only to a few, a few Black and poor White people, did the problems of survival seem as large as life and death, and so the city as a whole could call its problems small and manageable. Then suddenly 5,000 workers at the Campbell Works steel plant were laid off. And word came down slowly, first in rumors and then officially, that thousands more would be laid off and Youngstown steel production phased out of existence. Now everybody in Youngstown, almost everybody, had a *big* problem.



Prosperity for Youngstown workers meant new cars, campers, boats, all bought on time, until the bottom dropped out, leaving most penniless and in debt.

The steelworker in Youngstown had actually been doing pretty well. Youngstown Sheet and Tube was not the largest steel company in the country, but it was a big one with mines and plants throughout the country. The steelworkers made a good wage. Many were buying their own homes, drove new cars and had charge accounts that allowed them to buy the many small luxuries produced in this country. On the basis of the steelworkers' cash wages and good credit, the whole town prospered. Businesses that provided services to the workers hired other workers, and everybody had money. "Pockets" of poverty existed, and inflation and high prices put a crimp in everybody's style, but the future looked basically sound. Then the bottom fell out.

You have to go to Youngstown and talk to the workers to understand the shock and uncertainty that has hit that town. They believe it, but they don't believe it. The hard realities of working day to day for a giant corporation teaches the worker

that he is up against a very powerful monster, that often listens to nobody. But there were strong unions, collective bargaining agreements, committees for appealing grievances that made the worker think he was somehow a part of the ballgame. And the paycheck kept coming in every week, until they stopped coming in. Then the workers, strung out on credit and mortgages, spread out and disunified around the country in search of a well-paid, secure lifestyle, realized that they had been lulled into a false security and then dropped on the dump heap.

What Really Happened In Youngstown?

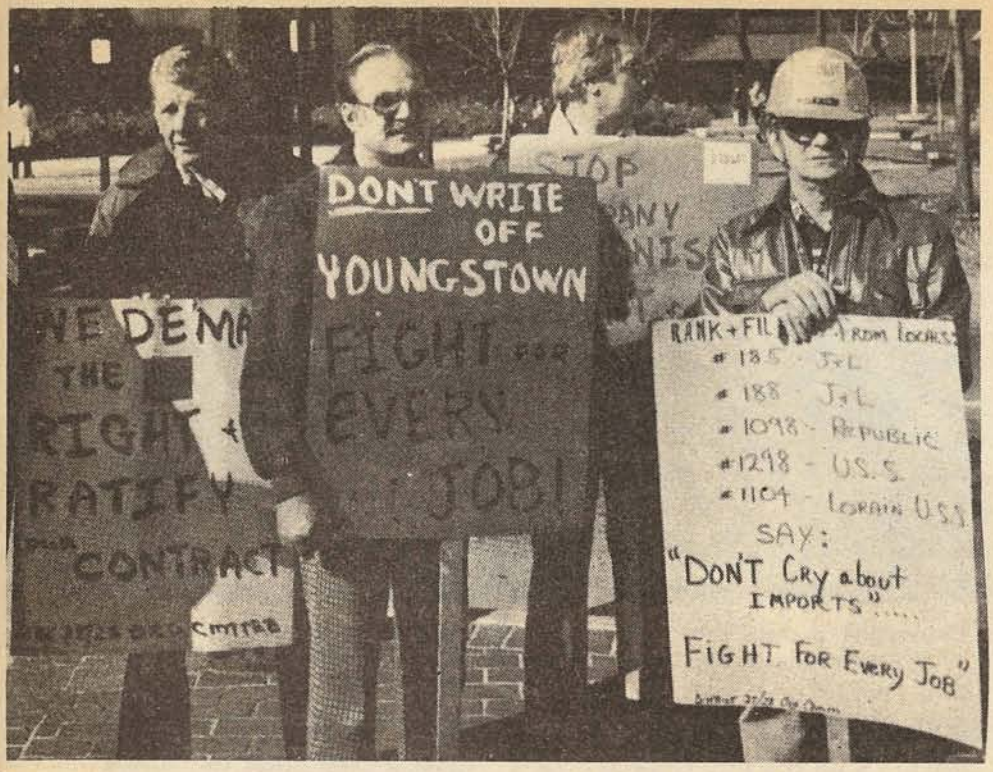
The steel industry said that foreign competition was hurting U.S.-made steel, and so the plant had to shut down. The International Union leadership, which had survived Sadlowski's grassroots challenge in the last election, agreed with the companies. They demanded that Carter do something about Japanese steel, and Carter went through the motions of a new trade agreement.

But the fact is that Japanese steel accounts for no higher a percentage of steel bought in the U.S. than it did in the 1960's. Japanese steel sells for just $3.60 a ton less than U.S. steel sells for, so that a minimum reduction in big steel company profits could allow U.S.-made steel to be the cheapest and best on the market. And European-made steel is not even vaguely competitive. So the reasons for the "crisis" in steel are not to be found in "foreign competition."

Construction been down in the last few years, and this has caused some problems in the steel industry. Federal money has gone more and more into the defense budget and less and less into rebuilding the cities, and this has hurt the market for steel in new construction. But even this figures below the two most important reasons for the Youngstown shutdowns: automation and the "bigger eating up the big."

What really happened in Youngstown is that there was a merger. Youngstown Sheet and Tube had been bought out some time ago by a giant conglomerate called Lykes Corporation. Similarly, another big steel company, Jones and Laughlin, had been bought out by another giant conglomerate called LTV. The executives of these two giants, located in Texas and Florida, with executives from the Bank of America in California acting as an intermediary, began working out a merg-

Strong unions, collective bargaining agreements and committees for appealing grievances made the workers think that they were somehow part of a big ball game. They had been "lulled into a false security and then dropped on the dump heap."



Mostly, the people of Youngstown are trying to get over the shock. A few are trying to take some action.

er. The bigger was eating up the big. LTV corporation would own both Jones and Laughlin Steel and Youngstown Steel. It would still not be as big as U.S. Steel Corporation, but it would make it into the top five.

Now Jones and Laughlin and Youngstown Sheet and Tube both make seamless pipe, but Jones and Laughlin uses the more modern BOF process, while Youngstown uses the old open hearth process. The difference between the two is like the difference between an old electric toaster and a new microwave oven. The BOF process can produce the same amount of steel in one hour that the open hearth process can produce in eight hours, and use fewer workers to do it. So LTV, owning both, would find it more efficient to shut down the Youngstown steel mills and use the superior Youngstown mine and scrap sources in the J & L mills. This, of course, is a little hard on the thousands of workers left hanging and the city that was built around their cash and credit business.

What They're Doing In Youngstown

Mostly, the people of Youngstown are trying to get over the shock. Many have put their heads in the sand while living off unemployment benefits that will run out in a few months and union benefits that are almost used up. A few are trying to take some action.

A coalition of organizations, involving some of the union locals, is trying to establish a community-worker owned corporation to buy and operate the steel mills. But Carter seems unwilling to come up with the necessary government assistance, and many of the workers are skeptical about putting their last dollars into a doubtful enterprise. Other union leadership is trying to block the merger or at least get the companies to maintain the remaining workers for ten years, or two years, or give them seniority rights in J & L mills.

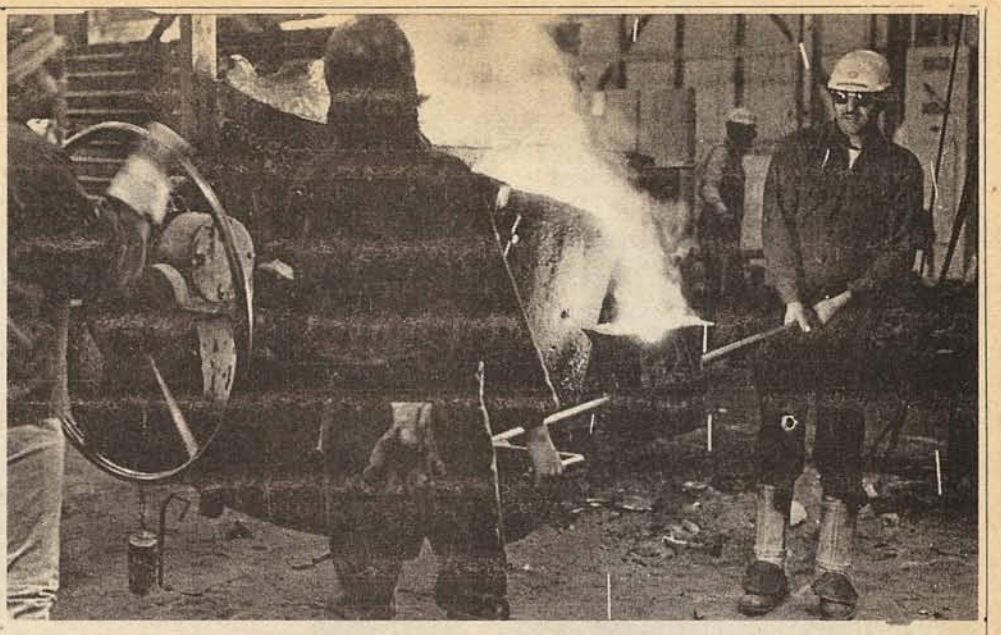
The cold facts are that the workers of Youngstown are dealing with men of enormous power scattered around the financial empire sites of the United States, who have most likely never even been to Youngstown, Ohio, and who will most likely never come there. And they are dealing with a President of the United States who smilingly makes empty promises to the people and smilingly says "yes, boss" to the boys with the big money. Finally, they are dealing with an international union whose platform is carefully copied from the

Steelworkers leaving the Campbell Works of Youngstown Sheet & Tube. Within the last few months, 5,000 workers have been laid off as the steel plant is being gradually phased out.

memorandums of steel company executives and whose president has time to speak on college campuses a few miles from Youngstown, but has no time to come to Youngstown itself.

"Youngstown, You Are America"

Youngstown is really happening all over this country. While there is big talk that the problems in the eastern and midwestern "snow belt" come from industry moving to the southwestern and western "sun belt," the truth lies deeper. Fact is, unemployment has not changed very much in cities like Dallas and Albuquerque where industry has moved. When a plant shuts down in the snow belt, the corporations get a big tax write-off. When they build a new plant in the sun belt it is highly automated. The highly skilled workers, in much smaller numbers, needed to run the new plant are brought in from other parts of the country. The unskilled and narrowly skilled workers in the sun belt are just as unemployed as they always were and as unemployed as their brothers and sisters in the snow belt. And every time there is a crisis or series of slow-downs in the economy, the large giants buy out the small giants and shut down less automated plants in areas where labor organization is strong to move to new automated plants where labor organization is weak. In ten years, they will be moving back to the snow belt, getting federal tax write-offs, blackmailing ailing local cities to get tax benefits and using an even smaller, more skilled workforce.



Youngstown is really happening all over this country, as big corporations, eaten up by bigger corporations, move to automation and a small, highly skilled work force.

People must fight for a country organized for full employment.

In a rare and painfully honest moment at the end of a three hour television special, Henry Kissinger commented that the major problem the western capitalist countries faced was rising unemployment. He pointed out that every major investment in North America and Europe since World War II had created less, not more jobs because of automation. Maybe it is time we listened to voices like Huey P. Newton who have been saying since 1966 that if the people do not fight for a country organized for full employment and a government organized to develop it, then the suffering will only get worse as places like Youngstown become like the Woodlawns and Uptowns of Chicago.□

National Perspective

S.1437 – U.S. Senate Approves Repressive Crime Code

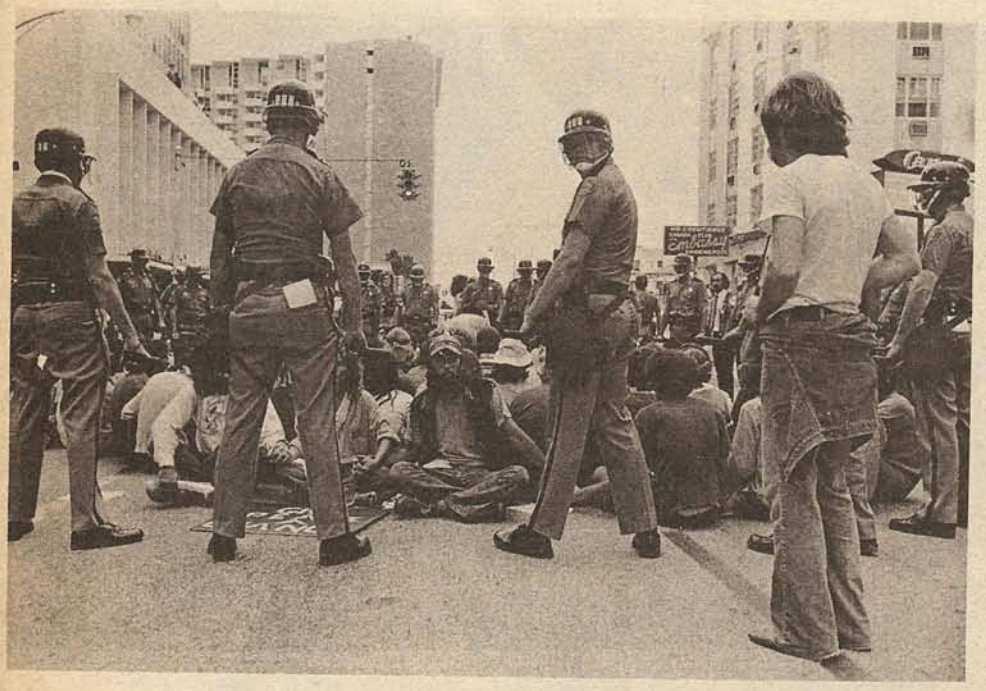
(Washington, D.C.) Despite mounting public opposition denouncing the bill as "repressive" and "an attack on civil liberties," the U.S. Senate passed the new federal criminal code, S.1437, by a 72 to 15 vote on January 30.

Co-sponsored by senators allegedly at opposite ends of the political spectrum, liberal Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts and the late arch conservative John McClellan of Arkansas, to broaden support, S.1437, like its predecessor, the notorious Senate Bill #1 (S.1), has been the target of nationwide protests.

It now goes to the House of Representatives, where the judiciary subcommittee will begin hearings in March. The House is only using the Senate bill as a "working draft," but Senate approval this early in the session improves the prospects for final action this year.

Backers of the new code, which took 12 years to write, claim that the measure revises, modernizes and consolidates 3,000 federal criminal laws into a uniform code — the most extensive revision of criminal law in U.S. history.

S.1, the "Criminal Code Reform Act of 1975," was beaten back after a two-year fight, with widespread public clamor against the bill rising to a crescendo.



Under S.1437, it would be illegal to demonstrate within 200 feet of any building used by a judicial official; boycotts and labor strikes would be severely limited.

S.1437, "the Criminal Code Reform Act of 1977," which carries insidious implications for the future in the areas of civil liberties, law and order, criminal justice and Constitutional freedoms, passed the Senate Judiciary Committee by a 12 to 2 vote last November 2. This is much farther than S.1 had progressed.

Under S.1437, for example, it would be illegal to demonstrate within 200 feet of any building used by a judicial official; the Constitutional right to remain silent before a grand jury is denied; boycotts and labor strikes would be severely limited since "threatening economic loss or injury to business" would be a federal crime.

One of the last actions the Senate took on S.1437 was to accept an amendment by Sen. James Allen of Alabama to retain a 1799 law known as the Logan Act which prohibits private citizens from communicating with foreign governments. This law was used to prevent peace movement activists in the late 1960's from attempting to talk with North Vietnamese.

Illinois Senators Adlai Stevenson and Charles Percy both voted in favor of S.1437, as did New York Senator Jacob Javits and Daniel Moynihan. California Senator S.I. Hayakawa voted in favor of S.1437 while Senator Alan Cranston opposed it.□

Reprinted from
The Black Panther

The "Longest Walk"

(Alcatraz Island, Calif.) About 500 Native Americans and their supporters gathered here Saturday, February 11, to consecrate the start of a 3,000 mile winter trek to Washington, D.C., to protest 11 pieces of anti-Indian legislation.

Native American leader Dennis Banks explained, "Congress represents those forces which want to legally take over our land and natural resources. Each bill chips away at the sovereignty of our people."

Before embarking on what they are calling, "The Longest Walk," Indians gathered on grounds east of old prison buildings on the site of an earlier Indian occupation of Alcatraz which ended in June, 1971.

The demonstrators then went to Sacramento to stage a rally before beginning the cross-country winter journey which is expected to last six months. By February 13, the group had reached Reno, Nevada.

Of the 11 pieces of repressive legislation, the primary focus of attention has been on H.R.9054, the deceptively named "Native American Opportunity Act," introduced by Representative Jack Cunningham of Washington state.

H.R.9054 provides not only for the abolishment of all treaties entered into with Indian tribes by the U.S., but also for the abrogation of all rights and protections guaranteed to Indian people by these treaties, such as the rights to hunt and fish. In effect, it will terminate all federal protections of Native Americans.

A strong force behind "The Longest Walk," Banks declared at the Alcatraz gathering, "Indians consider themselves equal to other nations. We are not subordinate or a subculture. We negotiate treaties which somehow are not being enforced by the more powerful nation, the United States."

A fugitive from South Dakota, Banks is wanted for sentencing on trumped-up charges in connection with the 1973 Custer Courthouse Indian uprising. California Governor Jerry Brown, however, has refused to extradite Banks. As a result of these circumstances, Banks was forced to drop out of the march when it neared the California border.

Banks said 24 persons have pledged to walk the entire distance but non-Indians may swell the ranks of walkers to 200 or 300 from time to time.

Meanwhile, Indian organizations throughout the country are alarmed by the recent upsurge of vocal, anti-Indian organizations in areas near Indian

Native Americans proceed to Alcatraz to launch "The Longest Walk."

reservations, and the repercussions these groups are causing in the nation's capital, reports *Liberation News Service*.

Wassaja, a national Indian newspaper, describes supporters of these anti-Indian groups as "(non-Indian) residents of Indian reservations who feel threatened by the prospect of Indian self-government.

The paper also names "commercial fishermen [and] some sports fishermen who have been led to believe the Indian tribes threaten their fishing privileges."

Many groups in question belong to the "Interstate Congress for Equal Rights and Responsibilities." This multi-state organization includes mainly "well-financed farmers, ranchers, cattle interests, water interests, timber interests, energy interests, hunting and fishing interests."

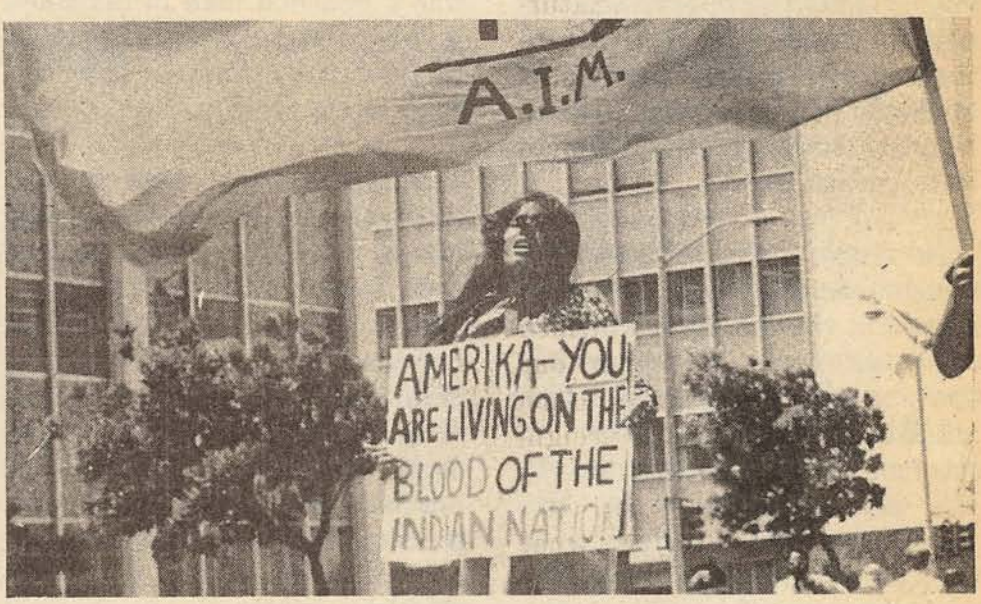
These organizations, according to *Wassaja*, have found sympathetic ears in Washington — most notably Washington state veteran Representative Lloyd Meeds and first-termer John Cunningham.

A bill introduced by Meeds in November amounts to a broadside attack on Indian water rights. The Quantification of Federal Reserved Water Rights for Indian Reservations Act (H.R.9951) provides that tribal water rights be limited to the maximum amount of water the tribe has used annually during the last five years.

Since in many cases, tribes are currently able to use only a small fraction of their legal entitlement because of the federal government's past and continuing failure to enforce their treaty rights, the bill would in effect ratify the theft of Indian water that has already taken place.

Although least likely to become law, the intentions of Cunningham's bill, H.R.9054, is the most ominous.

"It is the hope of Congressman Cunningham that Indians will no longer be super-citizens in the U.S. . . . that they'll all be brought into the mainstream of American society," says Bruce Addison, Cunningham's legislative assistant.



Native Americans, angered by the introduction of 11 anti-Indian bills in Congress and the rise of anti-Indian groups have begun "The Longest Walk," from California to Washington, D.C. to demand their rights.

A long line of Supreme Court decisions stretching back to the 1908 case of *Winters vs. U.S.* has repeatedly held that Indian tribes are entitled to enough water to make their reservations viable.

However, the development of coal and other natural resources in the West is impossible without water, and many energy corporations now view Indian reservations as the last remaining source of uncommitted water.

On the same day he introduced the water bill, Meeds introduced another — the Omnibus Indian Jurisdiction Act of 1977 (H.R.9950) — that would limit the rights of tribes to exercise legal jurisdiction on their reservations.

The bill would also end what Addison described as the system of "Indian welfarism where Indians [are] protected from cradle to grave through different health programs, different education programs, and housing programs."

The facts contradict Addison's assumptions, however. For example, the average income for Indian families on reservations is $1,500, unemployment is 45 per cent and the average number of years of schooling is only eight, according to government figures.□

Narciso And Perez Free!

(Ann Arbor, Mich.) On February 1, 1978, after two years of imprisonment on false charges of poisoning patients at the Veterans Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan, two Filipino nurses, Filipina Narciso and Leonora Perez, were freed.

In June 1975, a series of unusual respiratory arrests occurred at the VA Hospital. As a result of these breathing failures, several people died. The situation had been reported to the hospital administration by the staff, including the two nurses, and petitions had even been circulated to no avail. The administration did nothing.

In July 1975, when a doctor finally publicized the incidents, the FBI began an investigation into the deaths. The FBI produced a piece of paper that had the letters PIA written on it. According to the FBI, it had been written by John McGreery, a patient who suffered an unexpected respiratory failure and supposedly scrawled these letters on the paper just after his attack. The note led the FBI to center its investigation on nurse Filipina Narciso, whose nickname is Pia. In later questioning, McGreery, who has since died, could not positively identify anyone.

Richard Neely, another respiratory attack victim, produced the only evidence supposedly pointing toward the other accused nurse, Leonora Perez. Neely has also described the person at his bedside before the attack many different ways. At one time, he claimed that there was a bearded man in his room just before the attack. Later he claimed that the nurse Perez had been in his room.

Although there were several leads that had not been fully investigated, the FBI focused their suspicion on the nurses.

For example, according to the FBI, a powerful muscle relaxant drug, Pavulon, was found in the urine of at least two of the victims, but it is not clear what the causes were of the respiratory failures of the other patients, and other leads not followed were the possibilities of drug contamination and incidents other person described to be present during these respiratory arrests; as well, there was the case of the nurse who had been suffering terminal cancer and great mental depression and reportedly claimed responsibility for the VA deaths while confined for treatment in July 1976. She reportedly committed suicide on February 3, 1977, leaving a note confessing that she poisoned the VA patients. Instead of a full investigation of all possibilities of the case, the FBI concentrated on long hours of interrogation of the Filipino nurses, despite protests by fellow nurses and patients.

In June 1977, Narciso and Perez were arrested and charged with five counts of murder, two counts of poisoning and one count of conspiracy to commit murder. Narciso was $75,000 each, and they were released on bond.

Through January and February 1977 in the course of the pretrial hearing Judge Philip Pratt ruled that the prosecution had failed to comply with his order to turn over all vital evidence to the defense. It was revealed that the prosecution had withheld extensive material pointing to the nurses' innocence. Also, some of the materials had been altered, and parts favorable to the defense had been deleted. The court also ruled that the prosecutor could not use John McGreery's "Pia" note, as this was hearsay evidence. The prosecution also dropped the testimony of Richard Neely against Leonora Perez.

The trial began on March 1, 1977, and on June 8, 1977 Judge Pratt, citing insufficient evidence, dismissed some of the murder charges.

However, on July 14, the jury returned with a guilty verdict, on the remaining charges, and on September 15, Judge Pratt sentenced the nurses to the Federal Reformatory for Women in West Virginia.

After arguments for motions on mistrial, acquittal and new trial, the two nurses were released from prison. On December 18, Judge Pratt ordered a new trial, and on February 1, all poisoning charges were dropped.

Filipina Narciso and Leonora Perez will begin a speaking tour in March. They will talk about their experience and the discrimination they experienced both as women and Filipinos.□

Intercommunal Perspective

Puerto Rican Strikers Mobilize Support

(Chicago, Ill.) On December 27, 1977, 6,200 utility workers, members of the Union of Electrical and Irrigation Workers (UTIER) went on strike against the Water Resources Administration in Puerto Rico. A forum, sponsored by the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, was held February 5 in Chicago to mobilize support for the strike. The forum was part of a national tour being conducted by union militants involved in the recent wave of strikes in Puerto Rico which have been met with fierce repression by the government there.

While the UTIER strike started as a purely economic strike with wages as the only issue, government repression and anti-union activity have propelled political issues to the forefront bringing the right of government employees to strike under attack. Ever present in the background of the recent strikes is the question of the future of the "Commonwealth" of Puerto Rico. Will U.S. political and economic dominance of Puerto Rico be maintained or will independence be gained by the growing movement of "independistas" and socialists?

UTIER is one of Puerto Rico's strongest and most militant unions. Its members have gained wages (now about $7000 a year) and benefits above the Puerto Rican average though still well below those of U.S. workers doing similar work. On the other side is the Water Resources Administration, Puerto Rico's electrical industry. Government-owned in name, WRA is in reality controlled by U.S. business and banking interests which hold the greatest number of WRA bonds.

While issues regarding working conditions were settled earlier, the power company has refused to negotiate in good faith since the first bargaining sessions two months before the start of the strike, according to union leaders. UTIER has lowered its demands for a wage increase from $1.69 per hour to $1.41 and declared its willingness to negotiate further. The government has upped its offer twice, from 11 cents an hour to 18 cents and then to 30 cents, calling each offer "final."

The strike is being fought bitterly. Police have been called to break picket lines of strikers and supporters on numerous occasions. Several incidents of sabotage — lines slashed, towers felled, power stations bombed — have caused blackouts in many parts of the island.

The government has waged an intensive media campaign against the union and its leadership, blaming the strike, blackouts and sabotage on independistas and socialists, especially the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), one of whose members, Luis Lausell, is the president of

A forum was held in Chicago to mobilize support for the 6200 utility workers on strike in Puerto Rico.

UTIER. But the longer the government refuses to negotiate, the more the government itself is being blamed for the sabotage by forcing the utility workers to "take actions which will insure that they win," explained UTIER militant Gil Rios at the recent Chicago forum.

Miguel Cabrera, an organizer for the Teamsters Union in Puerto Rico, has been falsely charged with the murder of corporate lawyer Allan Randall, who was believed to have been a CIA agent.

Gov. Barcelo, who ran on an election promise supporting the right of public employees to strike, is now threatening to drop his support for the unionization of public workers. According to Rios, the reason for this is clear:

"The UTIER strike did not start as a political strike. It was in the process of protecting the bondholders [in the U.S.] who own WRA, through repression of UTIER workers, that the political character begins to come out overtly into the fore. Overall in Puerto Rico, the government policy is to deal severe blows and destroy wherever possible unions like UTIER, because they want to create an economic climate to attract investments from multinationals in the U.S. In order to do that they have to eliminate the obstacles to that process — unions like UTIER which have been able to continue to struggle for good contracts for their workers."

If UTIER wins the strike and, hence, maintains the right to strike, it will be the independence forces which will have gained, for it is the independistas who have most vigorously pressed this issue.

Meanwhile, a "new union movement" is being forged in Puerto Rico as numerous other strikes, including bus drivers and firemen, have occurred at the same time as the UTIER strike. Unity is being developed between the various striking unions and other militant unions such as the Teamsters. In fact, it has been the Teamsters which has borne the brunt of the government's anti-union repression.

Miguel Cabrera, an organizer for the Teamsters, has been falsely charged with the murder of corporate lawyer, Allan H. Randall, believed to have been a CIA agent. Another teamster, Juan Rafael Caballero, was found dead, obviously tortured. He was last seen being arrested in the aftermath of the Randall assassination. Teamsters have been implicated by the government and its "informers" in this murder also.

Cabrera, free on bail, appeared with Rios at the PRSC forum. He described Randall as a long-time CIA operative who came to Puerto Rico as a member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). When he left the NLRB, Randall became a corporate lawyer, organized seminars on how to negotiate contracts and fight unionization, and also organized the "paramilitary" Security Associates and the Association of Corporate Lawyers. This latter association has gathered thousands of files on union leaders, militants and internal workings of almost every Puerto Rican union.

Despite the repression which the Puerto Rican movement is now facing, it continues to grow. More and more socialists and independistas are being recognized as the leaders of this movement, giving direction and education to the workers whose "class consciousness develops through their own experiences defending their interests as workers."□

Carter's Plan – Oil Exchange For Braceros

(Los Angeles, Calif.) During the last days of January and early February, Congresspersons and other high officials from Carter's administration visited Mexico for talks with Mexican President Lopez Portillo. What was the purpose of these talks? It was to negotiate higher prices for Mexico's endorsement of a bracero program contained in Carter's immigration proposal. ter's immigration proposal.

The U.S. Delegation, headed by Vice President Walter Mondale, included Attorney General Griffin Bell, Labor Secretary Ray Marshall and Congressmen Rodino and Kennedy. The latter are well known for initiating repressive bills against undocumented workers and their families.

The tremendous Mexican oil riches, which officials from Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) say are comparable to Saudi Arabia's, contrast sharply with the extreme poverty of nearly 60 million Mexicans. This poverty ultimately spurs the immigration of 20 per cent of the population to the U.S. in search of better opportunities.

In a desperate attempt at overcoming Mexico's deep economic crisis, its government initiated construction of a pipeline which will constantly carry gas to the U.S. This pipeline is more than a project, for its work goes on at an accelerated pace.

Mexican government reports presuppose a selling price among the best in the world per thousand cubic feet. However, a U.S. Energy Department report states the contrary and asserts prices with Mexico have not been settled.

Progressive sectors, especially the left parties in Mexico, consider the KKK's presence at the border to patrol and prevent the entry of undocumented workers to be further U.S. pressure to obtain from negotiations favorable oil prices and the imposition of Carter's "amnesty" plan.

The Mexican government, in an attempt to overcome their economic crisis, has installed a pipeline to carry gas to the United States.

Many progressive people feel there is a direct connection between the pipeline and increased patrol of the borders to prevent undocumented workers from entering the U.S.

According to the Mexican press, the proposed talks between U.S. and Mexican officials were Carter's desperate attempts to find support for his plan which has been widely rejected for not solving the problems of millions of undocumented workers.

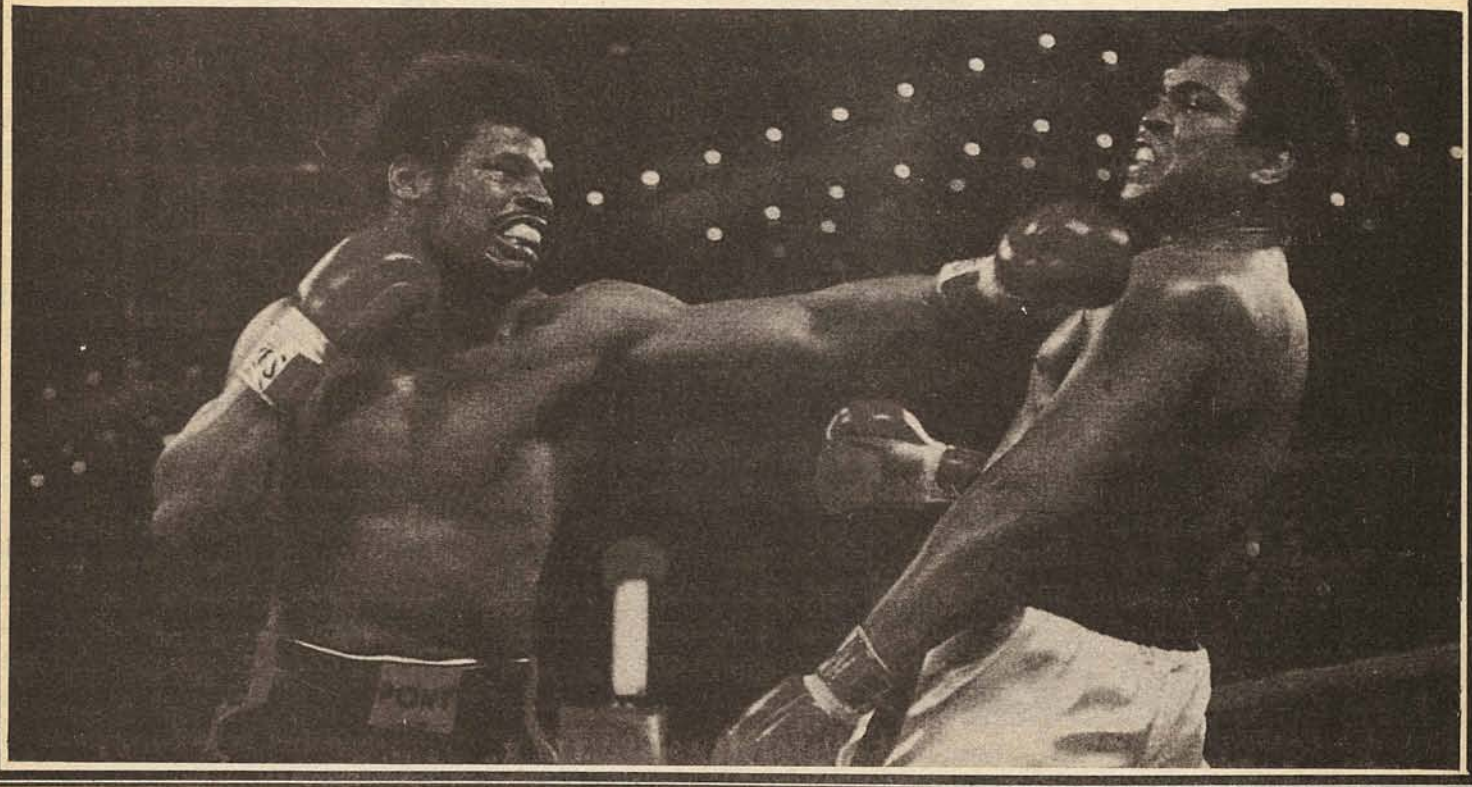
On the other hand, the press believes, the talks reflect Mexico's economic dependence, an advantage for the U.S. in the oil talks. Oil, according to President Lopez Portillo, is "the backbone which will help Mexico out of the economic slump in which it finds itself." □

Sports

HE SHOOK THE WORLD

In a hard fought, surprise split decision 24-year-old Leon Spinks dethroned Muhammed Ali as heavyweight champion. Spinks gained the championship in only his eighth pro fight, outpointing a weary 36-year-old Ali in his 21st and only unsuccessful title defense. But as all the post fight hooplah dies down we have to wonder why is Ali only now being called a "gentleman" and "great fighter"? Where were the voices of these same T.V. commentators years back when Ali was stripped of his title and not allowed to fight in the prime of his career because of his opposition to an unjust war being fought in Asia? Where was *Time* magazine, which now has Ali on its cover, during those years?

Muhammed Ali was the same man and the same fighter during that time as now, and although Leon Spinks fought a great fight and deserved the title, he did not win because he was a member of the Marines, but rather because, as with Ali, he was forced to grow up under a situation through which he developed a great amount of courage. Perhaps these so-called "sports commentators" would do better to concentrate more on sports and less on their own personal prejudices.□



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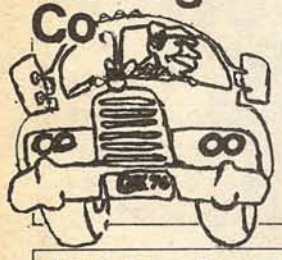

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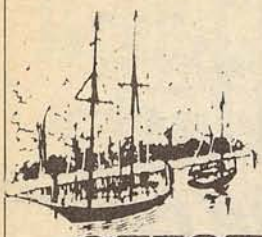

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A PROGRAM FOR SURVIVAL

"All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the community but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution."—Huey P. Newton

Each One Teach One Program

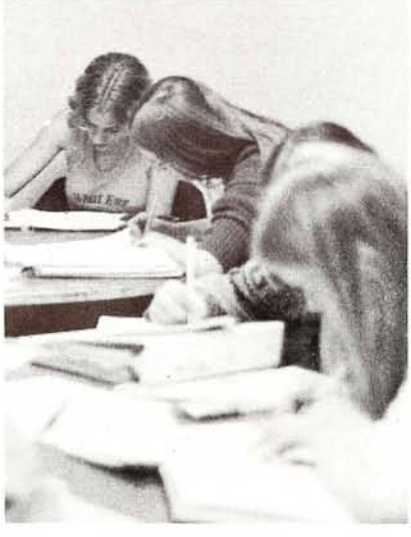
Founded on the concept that it is everyone's responsibility to teach our children the skills necessary to survive, this program concretely is designed to raise the reading skills of the neighborhood youth.

Tenants Survival Union

Provides assistance and community support in landlord-tenant disputes. Building management and maintenance skills which exist in the community are put to use in order to improve neglected buildings.

Legal Education & Defense Program

Offers counseling, advice and assistance in finding an attorney when necessary in any kind of legal, welfare or social security dispute.



The Uptown Community Learning Center

Black Lung Association

Provides assistance to ex-coal miners and their widows in their struggle to get the benefits they are entitled to by law.

Mutual aid programs also exist to deal with basic food, transportation and medical needs to the more severely afflicted black lung victims.

Intercommunal News Service

Provides news and information about the world and poor and oppressed communities through the distribution of *Keep Strong* magazine and *The Black Panther.*

Food Cooperatives

Provides good quality foods at lower than supermarket prices through community participation and community cooperative buying.

These are crucial times.
For the questions that need
to be asked and the answers
we desperately need

Read

KEEP STRONG

- **How are local black lung associations across the country uniting and influencing legislation in Washington, D.C.?**
- **Why has Carter called for the establishment of metropolitan government as a solution to our decaying inner cities?**
- **Why has the FBI spent millions in tax dollars to gather information on over five million American citizens?**
- **Who was Steve Biko, and why was it so important to the South African government to silence him?**

Veteran Journalist Mike LaVelle says:

"Keep Strong is needed because it deals with the problems of the disenfranchised and abused at the gut level of their desperate lives. . . Three cheers for the Keep Strong staff because it believes in and fights for truck drivers, miners and others who work without benefit of titles, desks or white collars."

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Keep Strong
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